BECAUSE I CAN: EXPLORING FACULTY CIVIC AGENCY

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Preface

This working paper reflects a series of conversations that have been taking place within the Kettering Foundation's research on the democratic mission of higher education. In our research, we have noticed that many of the most innovative efforts have come from faculty who are deeply frustrated with narrow conceptions of what counts as scholarship and seek to connect their professional work with deeply held civic aspirations. This led us to focus on the faculty as a key strategic agent of change in efforts to strengthen the democratic mission of higher education. In 2008, drawing upon earlier work by Harry Boyte and Scott Peters, we began a series of workshops to gain insight into the motivations and experiences of engaged scholars. In this report, KerryAnn O'Meara captures the common themes and narratives of these conversations. In each of the cases, engaged faculty overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles and persevered in meaningful public work. While O'Meara takes these obstacles seriously, her work provides a rebuttal to the view that faculty are powerless to change institutional systems. As higher education struggles to define its democratic mission, the future may depend upon whether others are able to relate to the civic aspirations of these exemplary scholars.

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Introduction

Recent studies describe postsecondary faculty in the United States and abroad as "divided, disillusioned, distressed" individuals whose ability to carry out the work they love is constrained and subverted by forces of neoliberalism, managerialism, careerism, and academic siloing (Davies and Peterson 2005). Cultures of constraint are described everywhere in interviews and surveys of faculty. Beck and Young (2005, 184) note that their own study of faculty "evokes a sense of crisis and loss, alienation and anomie entailed by the new times." The sense that one gets from most scholarship and stories on the professoriate is that this group of professionals has been hit hard by the restructuring of academic positions and additional pressures for accountability and performance. Consequently, it is a struggle for faculty today to find and pursue meaningful work.

This report offers a counterpoint. In collaboration with the Kettering Foundation, and with the assistance of University of Maryland doctoral student, Andy Lounder, I interviewed 25 faculty exemplars in higher education civic engagement to understand the origins of their sense of civic agency, the enabling and disabling conditions they encounter, and how they respond to barriers. Here 25 highly agentic, civically engaged scholars were asked for their stories. Rather than divided and disillusioned, these engaged scholars are strategic and focused. They describe deep commitments to work that they love, integrating their teaching and research with public problems. None of these faculty described work lives filled with crisis and loss. Rather they were networked and deeply connected to community partners, students, and other faculty. This unusual sample of exemplar engaged faculty, all of whom have been nominated for or won national awards for their work, were chosen intentionally for us to understand the potential of civic

agency and its impact in higher education. Finally, I consider what these scholars are creating in terms of a "new normal" for higher education and its relationship to public work. These 25 cases provide a window into what civic agency looks like in action and what higher education might look like if it continues to embrace public work.

This report should be read as a companion, and in conversation with those of many Kettering colleagues, such as Harry Boyte, Scott Peters, Al Dzur, and Peggy Shaffer, who have all examined the strategies and experiences of engaged scholars in contemporary times. If anything, it may perhaps be more optimistic than some other accounts of this work. The study focuses more on what is being accomplished, and is possible, than past work of my own and others that examined barriers. On balance, this seems important. Ganz (2010) observed:

> A structural bias in social movement studies seems to have made it more productive for scholars to identify the constraining conditions that make certain outcomes more probably than to focus on enabling conditions that make many outcomes possible. Agency, however, is more about grasping at possibility, than conforming to probability (Ganz, 511).

Throughout this study, engaged scholars tell you what has been possible for them, and what they think will be possible as they move forward. Their stories make it clear that this public work is not just grasping at possibility, but orchestrating it. These professional lives are full of agency, and the public good, and all of us are better for it.

Many scholars have explored what human agency is and what influences it. I was influenced in this study by the following definitions and observations. Amartya Sen's (1985) simple definition of *agency* is "the ability to act on behalf of goals that matter to [oneself]." Boyte (2008) built on Emibayer and Mische's (1998) work to define *civic agency* as "navigational capacities" to negotiate and transform the world toward greater

democracy. These definitions combined reflect an emphasis on how civic agency allows one to pursue goals that matter to them via intentional strategies and capacities, both learned and innate. I also kept my attention cued to the idea that agency is a core ingredient of social change and a key component of well-being (Alkire 2005), as well as a key aspect of faculty professional growth (O'Meara, Terosky, and Neumann 2008).

Methodology and Sample

The participants for this study are distinct and were chosen for a very specific purpose. Since this study is focused on faculty civic agency, we needed to select participants we believed would be most likely to have a sense of agency in this work. That is, we needed faculty who were exemplars and well seasoned and acknowledged in civic engagement. As such, the individuals in this study were faculty who were (for the most part) successfully navigating barriers and reshaping their fields, classrooms, and civic spaces. A secondary benefit of focusing on exemplars is that previous research has rarely distinguished between what institutional supports and conditions matter to civically engaged faculty involved at different levels: (beginner, somewhat involved, exemplar). By focusing on exemplars we get insight into the aspects of institutional environments that best support civic engagement for the most involved faculty.

The majority of the individuals profiled were tenured or tenure-track faculty. Each was chosen by virtue of their having been engaged in substantial, in-depth community and civic engagement, for which they had been nominated or won awards and other recognition. The interviews lasted about an hour each and were transcribed and analyzed. I also collected vitae and other career materials describing participants' engagement.

In terms of background the faculty were: 21 White, 3 Latino, 1 Asian American; 10 men and 15 women; 10 from lower or lower-middle-class backgrounds, and 15 from middle- and upper-class backgrounds; 1 lecturer, 8 assistant professors, 3 associate professors, 11 full professors, and 2 emeritus. They came from mostly four-year institutional types. Using Carnegie classifications: 44 percent RU/VH, 24 percent RU/H, 12 percent Masters, 8 percent DRU, 4 percent Bac/Diverse, 4 percent Bac/A&S, 4 percent Assoc/Pub-U-MC. They were diverse in terms of disciplines and fields: 28 percent Arts and Humanities, 48 percent Social Sciences, 12 percent Physical Sciences, 4 percent Life Sciences, and 8 percent Professions.

In order to foster a connection to individual cases I will rely primarily on stories from 5 of the 25 participants. Because I promised anonymity to the participants in the study, I am renaming them here and often omit specific names of cities and centers they mention. The five stories that will be used to illustrate broad themes are from the following participants:

- Jonah, a faculty member/administrator at a Southern research university who studies ethics and is early career. His public work engages students and community members in projects that address key problems of poverty in his state (e.g. heath care, taxes, preparation for college).
- Laura, an engineering professor from a Southern comprehensive university who is mid-career. She works with students and community partners on the construction of playgrounds and park equipment for schools and recreational areas.

- Kaela, an art professor from a Midwest research university who is early career. Her public work engages students and community members in art projects that pull female students closer to technology and a pipeline toward school success.
- Jennifer, an urban planning professor from a Northeast research university who is early career. Her public work is situated in a nearby city where she works with community partners and students in community economic development and urban planning for affordable housing and open space.
- Mike, a political science professor from a Mid-Atlantic baccalaureate college who is late career. His public work engages students and community partners in research and evaluation partnerships to assess public opinion and support for various public options being considered for improvement of urban and rural areas.

Starting Places

There were two kinds of "starting places" for these engaged scholars. Similar to the findings of Daloz, et al. (1997), who studied the backgrounds of individuals committed to the "common fire," or public good, each of these 25 actors attributed their work to early family, religious, community, and professional experiences before entering academia.

"The best of what my family stood for." One of the strongest family connections was from Jonah who talked about his family's deep connections to public life in his state. Jonah recalled growing up in the light of his family's work in public life and involvement

in politics and community; he talked about always knowing he wanted to be a part of that family legacy and that legacy of service to his state.

Jonah said:

> I mean, my family identity and my family's place in history—I don't think there's glory to it. Sometimes I'm not sure there's any more to it than, you know, the fact that most firemen, their fathers were firemen. Most policemen in New York, their fathers were policemen. If my father were a doctor—I was so in love with my father. He was such an incredible hero to me, I would have followed him into medicine. This was just sort of the language of my childhood—the best of what my family stood for, to me, and it just becomes very addicting.

Kaela recalled a family history of service influenced by religious tradition:

> As a child, I think I was loosely raised in the Catholic tradition, with an emphasis on service and missionary type of service, I would say. Not heavily, but that's always been a part of my family, my grandmother in particular. So, as a child I felt like I was interested in doing service type of work. I didn't know what that meant. I liked to volunteer, and I always found myself doing those things through high school, sort of searching for meaningful ways to volunteer. But it wasn't—it was from sort of a savior mentality, I would say. And then, through college, I would participate in some service types of experiences.

"This is where my family is from": Connection to Place. In addition to reflecting on his family, Jonah described his love of place, of his home state and his civic work growing out of a long-grown commitment to that state. He said:

> The origins—maybe this is too simple a way to put it, but I came back to [name of state]—I don't really say this in speeches, because it sounds too corny, but this is where my family is from. I grew up very very attached to sort of the memory and the story of my family's involvement in the area. It just seemed very exciting to me and very stimulating. From the time I was young, when I started visiting (I grew up in a different state), I just loved it here. It just seemed sort of mythological to me. It's very human and green and beautiful, and there's this incredible racial history, and my family had a big role in different aspects of it, and I was just craving coming home to get involved in it. I got here, and the evolution of this is just thinking through, what's the biggest way I can make an impact in [the state]?

This case was illustrative of many others where faculty noted, “this is where I grew up,” or observed that they had grown up in a city or connected to a place and had wanted to re-create that connection to place in the place of their faculty appointment.

Identity. The faculty in this study also mentioned other key aspects of their identity as influencing both their interest in this work, why they stayed involved and, in a few cases, how they went about their work. For example, faculty members from working-class backgrounds who were first-generation college students reflected on a commitment to make their work relevant to the communities where they grew up and to working-class community members. Others, like Laura reflected on how being a minority in her field made her both more aware of creating better academic environments and somewhat of a fighter. Laura said:

> I can tell you that I was the only woman in my undergraduate engineering class, and it was very difficult, and I was really not part of the crowd, and I struggled to fit in and to kind of make it through professors telling you, you know, “It’s been scientifically proven that men have superior spatial abilities” and “Are you really sure you can do this?” and all that, or “I don’t think you should do this.” I would say for the first two years of my college career it made me doubt it. I would say, after that I got mad. I had to prove people wrong, and I think I had that attitude probably all the way to maybe real early in becoming an assistant professor. And I do feel, I guess, a strong duty, to make sure that the environment is equitable, welcoming, fair, etc. But I’m not sure how much of a direct connection that has to service learning. That’s just a base value. It’s a strong value.

All of the women faculty felt their identity as women influenced both why they were interested in public work and how they went about it. All of the women who were parents talked quite a bit about the world their children would inherit and mentioned that part of their identity as a central explanation for their sense of civic agency. (White male

faculty recognized the privilege that they experienced in terms of identity but never mentioned their approach as connected to gender).

Additionally, more than half of the participants talked about growing up in a specific religious tradition and the effect of growing up Catholic, Episcopalian, Jewish, or as one participant observed, “a preacher’s kid,” on their current sense of obligation to the world, and a sense of the need to be involved in work that was contributing to a community, public, or the world. This was true whether or not they were currently practicing those religions.

Professional Experiences. In addition to family, place, and the overall conception of citizenship, many participants observed that their professional experiences before entering academe were important starting places for their later civic work. For example, Mike said: “Well, I was a community organizer for eight years before going to graduate school, in between undergraduate and graduate school, so that was my main source of income for those eight years. And you know, I’ve been very active politically, and community development efforts for a long time.” He went on to observe later that because of this earlier work being involved in civic work now: “It’s very, very easy and comfortable for me, in fact, more so to go out and work in the community than it is to work on campus.”

The second part of the story of the origins of civic agency for these 25 participants was how the work emerged once they came into contact with higher education. For a few participants (five), this meant some key experiences in graduate school with mentors involved in civic work. For more of the participants it had to do with

their discipline and field, and for others it was critical incidents where they met community partners and became intrigued by *their* work in the public sphere. Finally, many of the participants came to engagement with communities out of a desire to produce better teaching and learning conditions and then found themselves pulled into commitments to specific community partners, issues, and projects.

Discipline and Field. On one hand, Boyte (2004; 2008) has observed that disciplines, and our socialization into them, are responsible for much of the damaging technocratic approach that higher education institutions have taken to interactions with community. This approach holds that faculty, as experts in their disciplines and fields, should lend their expertise to community partners to solve problems and often ignores the local knowledge embedded in those communities. Indeed many of the same participants in this study who noted their training in and identification with a discipline as an origin of their civic work, also observed that their training could be a hindrance in that it sometimes caused them to assume too much about what they had to contribute going into the partnership. Yet identification with field and discipline and the professional role of that field in the world, consistent with Dzur's (2008) notion of academic professional, was a common starting place for many faculty in the study.

This notion of being involved in public work because it is part of who they are as a biologist, engineer, political scientist, and so on is also consistent with previous studies I have conducted on exemplars in community engagement (O'Meara 2008; O'Meara and Niehaus 2009). In other words, it made sense to them in terms of how they understood the role of someone trained as they were in this discipline/field. It was what they believed

they *were supposed to do*, and what they had been shown they *could do,* to make an impact on the world.

Mike explained:

> Political science is more conducive to this. Being a citizen, and a citizenship is at the heart of what political science is all about, other than political theory. Citizenship is all about making the world a better place, so you know, that to me means going out, and doing practical work in the community.

Jennifer explained: "I think the first thing is my identity as a landscape architect. So, I went to [graduate school] and was trained as a landscape architect, where we learned that it's all about place. So, that explains the need to be deeply embedded in a place while studying or researching." This was a common theme across disciplines and fields and clearly an area to probe for future research. Do some fields and disciplines do a better job of socializing faculty to consider the public role of their discipline and field?

Community Partners: Not so "Chance" Encounters. Another strong thread in participant memories of why and how they became involved in public work relates to how they met their community partners. One interesting part of listening to these stories was that faculty described these first meetings vividly, similarly to how many married couples describe their first meeting. Most often they described them to us as "chance encounters" that started a really important relationship, project, or network for them. Yet in listening to each of these stories side by side it becomes clear that the meetings were not exactly by chance. In fact, the participants had placed themselves, "in the right place at the right time" for such encounters and, whether consciously or unconsciously, seemed to be looking for them.

Kaela observed that she began her engagement work as a faculty member after one such chance encounter at a conference. She said: “I met a woman who runs an organization in this neighborhood when I was new to [institution]. And she came to an outreach conference that was in [city] and came to my presentation and asked if I was looking for a partner in [city].” Despite her insinuation of serendipity, Kaela was at an outreach conference, presenting and making it known she was interested in this kind of work. She behaved in a way that made such an encounter very likely, if not probabilistic.

Desire for Real-World Experiences for Students. The desire to be a good teacher and to create real-world engagement for students has been found by many other studies as a starting place for public work (Abes, Jones, and Jackson 2002; O’Meara 2008; O’Meara and Niehaus 2009). Laura, among many other participants in this study, described the origins of her public work in this same way. She said:

> Well, they’re learning something called the engineering method, which is sort of like a road map for how all engineers try to solve problems and achieve goals. So, you have to identify your problem before you can solve it, and I really want my students to—that’s a lot harder process than it probably sounds like, but I really wanted my students to learn how to work with community, learn how to work with people that all have different ways of communicating and different desires. And I really want my students to experience the struggle with trying to meet the needs and desires of disparate groups when they’re doing a design for one thing. So, that’s part of the issue. I want them to learn how to use safety standards and engineering standards in the execution of a design. Of course, students have to learn a whole lot around safety standards and how to put them into effect. When they do a design, I want them to be able to capture the soul of a community through their design, and I want them to be able to communicate it well.

These kinds of goals could only be achieved with engagement in public work, and this was true for at least three-quarters of the participants. However, it was a cycle wherein

the work in the community also caused them to amend their goals for students, to want more than academic learning. This was a key starting place for civic agency and action.

The Public Work

The public work of these 25 engaged scholars was diverse in form and content. They were working in partnership with community organizations to rezone blighted areas of cities for affordable housing and local economic development and building playgrounds that were safe and designed with the children's help. In some cases they were working with teachers to transform K-12 classrooms to be more engaged with communities and to turn students on to STEM fields, and in others they were creating art with community members. There were several common elements to these diverse projects. These public work projects, described by participants, (a) were partnership and needs driven; (b) engaged students as co-producers; (c) had a systematic, thoughtful approach; and (d) were positioned for high impact.

Partnership and Needs Driven. Each of the participants was sewn into a network or a partnership wherein individuals were working for the betterment of a specific community, location, or issue. Within the contexts of these partnerships they became aware of different needs of community partners and then tried to connect different aspects of their research, teaching, and professional service lives to these projects. In doing so, they were light on their feet and flexible, often shifting how they engaged with these partnerships depending on what was going on "on the ground." For example, Jennifer explained:

> We very much follow where the community is going and what they're up to, and what they've been up to for the past seven or eight years, has been improving the civic arena and getting citizens engaged in public discussions and public decision-making processes, from zoning campaigns to a whole wide range of things. It could be one affordable housing development site. And more recently, this nonprofit organization that we work with—a couple of our alumni brought in this organization, so we've got really strong ties there, and they're undergoing a redevelopment process there.

Embedded in perspectives here was the assumption that new teaching, research and professional activities could be and would be intimately tied to partner goals and work.

Students as Partners and Co-producers. A second key characteristic of this public work was that it engaged students in purposeful ways. Faculty seemed to have high expectations for student involvement as partners and co-producers of the products of the public work. For example, Jennifer said:

> Students plug in for [partners] in ways that make sense for them and make sense for the community, so for some students that means providing technical support, so doing grant writing or just really adding capacity for these organizations, helping with the zoning regulations, doing architectural drawings, things that some other students find very mundane and wouldn't even dream of doing.

Another participant observed that it was the process of creating those relationships that he found most exciting about his engagement work:

> I think what really excites me is the idea of trading new ways of practicing, new ways of teaching, developing new partnerships. Especially for me it's involving students in that co-creative process. So, I think all the work I do involves students in everything from developing the partnerships to co-teaching classes to jointly offering things. So that, I think, is another piece of the . . . what excites me about this work is that it's a different way for faculty to interact with their students. It can actually put them in a process where they are teachers and they actually over time are developing a lot more local knowledge of the community than even me in a lot of pieces, and they're able to teach me and teach the other students. So, I think those are kind of, trading new things and partnering with students around co-creation are probably the core elements for me.

Participants held the perspective that students could make major contributions in terms of scholarship, civic dialogues, and organizing if treated as real learning partners.

Systematic and Thoughtful. One of the major criteria outlined by Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) to assess all forms of scholarship is that the work uses appropriate methods and knowledge. One of the common elements of the public work of these engaged faculty was their attention to a thoughtful, systematic, and scholarly approach to the public problems their work addressed. Just as teaching and learning environments can be critiqued for a lack of thoughtful approach to engaging students in their learning, or research can be critiqued for being “light” on critical analysis and rigor, civic engagement can and should be critiqued for approach. In the case of public work, the criteria often applied relate to reciprocity and understanding of the issues on the ground, as well as impact. However, it is also important to consider how the most exemplary public work takes a systematic and well-considered approach to an issue. For example, in Jennifer’s case this meant applying methods from her discipline to a problem in the city where she was working. She said:

> The first work that I did was . . . I needed to teach a seven-week workshop on geographic information systems, so I needed to teach students how to do computerized mapping for seven weeks. They [her community partners] asked us to help them with this zoning campaign, where they needed to pass a zoning ordinance, for the first time in five decades, to allow redevelopment of the mills—to allow housing in the mills. So, it was a zoning overlay. They sort of unpacked all of the different dynamics, politically, that were happening, and they asked us to help the campaign by infusing the process with some facts. Their concerns were that there was a lot of myth and a lot of hype and people arguing about things that weren’t true. So, they wanted us to collect data and then visually present some facts about the history of the city and give people a tool for understanding how the zoning overlay would impact ordinary citizens, small business owners, artists, folks like that. So, that’s what we did. We created this

> online mapping tool that helped to support their campaign for the zoning overlay initiative.

In this example we see the careful use of computerized mapping systems to address a problem in conjunction with well-informed, on-the ground knowledge.

Positioned for High Impact. One of the most inspiring aspects of this project was reading and listening to stories of public work with major, measurable impact. The projects described by the 25 individuals resulted in changes to neighborhoods, policy, and opportunity structures for community members. In looking across the stories, one of the things that seemed very evident was how well designed they were for this impact. There are likely many reasons for this, but one of the major ones seemed to be their emphasis from the start on producing social change. Also, because faculty developed these projects with community partners, who were so close to the issues they were addressing, they were positioned to make a bigger difference.

Kaela described her projects emerging from a partnership with a community partner and previous work in the community:

> That program is focused on connecting girls and young women to technology and emphasizing the female component as a way to encourage girls to utilize technology. So, my piece is sort of a small piece in their pipeline, beginning with elementary school, up through college. This is filling the middle school component of that pipeline, and also serves as a way to garner more interest in girls, because there's an art-making component, and what we've seen so far is that it's bringing more interest by the girls into this program and into exploring the computer.

The work seems to have impact in this case less because it is involving hundreds of individuals, as this project involved less than 100. Rather, it is well positioned because Kaela knows this community and has considered how art can pull young women toward

technology. The story suggested that this project was well positioned not because it was a well-known problem in the state (though K-12 education, of course, is a major policy issue), but rather because it was an intimate approach, positioned close to community interests and the faculty member's talents and skills, in direct response to a well-established need.

Enabling Conditions: Scaffolding for Public Work

Many scholars have observed that engagement occurs despite, rather than because of, dominant norms and reward systems in higher education. One major reason for this relates to the sense of intrinsic satisfaction and professional growth that faculty access through public work. In a review of the literature on faculty and faculty work life conducted by O'Meara, Tersoky, and Neumann (2008), a new framework was developed to think about and study faculty professional growth. The framework considers four key aspects of professional growth and how they occur. These four aspects are learning, agency, relationships, and commitments. In the 25 faculty cases, I found many examples where faculty talked about being motivated by the opportunities their civic work provided for these aspects of faculty professional growth. In other words, whether or not their institution was supportive, the benefits of participation to these individuals were great—and well recognized as a key form of professional growth.

Learning. Considerable research has shown that a major reason faculty want to be faculty is for intellectual engagement (Gappa et al. 2007; Hagedorn 2000; Neumann 2009). Indeed, a major reason the engaged faculty involved in public work were doing this work

was also intellectual engagement. Faculty described how their projects offered endless and irreplaceable opportunities for them to learn how things they studied worked in practice and to develop skills and understandings unavailable in academic discourse in their fields. As Jennifer observed:

> The reason I got involved to begin with is that I saw something happening in [name of place] that I had never seen before, and it just seemed to me that I'd be missing out on something if I didn't get involved. And it's been—one of the reasons I've stayed involved so long, and the relationships have a lot to do with it, but I've just learned so much from the practitioners there, about how to cope with the kinds of problems that most industrial cities are facing. They're really onto something.

Jennifer observes that they were really onto something, and she wanted to be a part of that—she did not want to miss out on this opportunity—to not only contribute to social change but to learn and watch how it was working, an area of scholarly passion for her.

Mike reflected on the meaning, growth, and satisfaction he took from getting feedback that his work was making a difference. He observed:

> Well first of all, I don't get, we don't get paid a lot to do this. I mean, we don't get any additional pay, we don't get any relief time for the work we do in the community. So whatever it is that sustains me in that regard is not the money. We have a lot of evidence showing real outcomes, both in terms of the usefulness in the community, the value of the research we do for the organizations. We have some concrete evidence that it is actually making a difference. Also, on the educational side we do a very comprehensive evaluation at the end of the semester of student participants, and we have a lot of evidence, too. For them, it's a transformational experience, it's a growth process, just on a lot of indicators … and then, just learning research methods, a whole maturation process of them moving from thinking like students to thinking as citizens and professionals. Those kinds of concrete outcomes really motivate me. I'm very pleased to see them. Seeing these things happen to the students, and there is a real value to the community.

These findings are consistent with the work of Anna Neumann (2009) on how faculty strategize new contexts and bring them into being in order to learn. In these cases the

process of creating projects of lasting public value is a major site of learning and professional growth for engaged scholars.

Relationships and Networks: "I am part of a real network." All of the civic agents in this study described important relationships they had developed as part of their engagement, which served as both starting places for civic work and ongoing motivation for continued work. Some of these relationships were with individual community partners, some with community members involved in the engagement, and some with their students and other faculty engaged in the same work.

Participants felt these relationships were deeper and more holistic than they might have been if they had formed under other circumstances. For example, Jennifer observed:

> The first is about the relationships with the students in particular. I think in doing this kind of work I develop a different kind of relationship with students than I might if I taught more lecture-oriented classes, where they were writing papers, by having these open discussions, by having community partners come into the classroom.

Mike described the personal growth and satisfaction he took from being a part of a larger group connected to something he strongly believes in:

> I now feel part of a real network, being an activist. I mean, this in a way, was my entree into the community activism network in [region and state], was doing this work, especially in the area that my research has been, and how it relates to community and economic development. And so, it's been really, very valuable to me to become a part of that network. One of my best friends was the director, I was telling you, he was the director of the community development component of that, and he and I became very good friends. I've developed both professional and personal contacts out of it.

Engaged faculty observed that these relationships formed in contrast to their experiences with traditional research in many cases. Jennifer observed: "Doing research work is very isolating, and for me it was unsatisfying, and now, with the partnership and

this new kind of work I don't feel isolated in the work that I'm doing because I've got students that are so engaged with the work with their community partners." It is interesting to note that for these faculty members their sense of community and purpose was much stronger with partners off campus. In other words, they seemed to be finding something in the way of collegial support and relationships they were not getting primarily through their disciplines, departments, or campus.

Related to this point, a participant in this study observed that his approach as an engaged artist was very much influenced by his desire to be in community and not isolated. He said:

> I remember making this sculpture that I described as a metaphor for the loneliness of solitary apartment dwellers. It looked like a tower with one window. That's how I was living at that point … so I just decided to get rid of that distance and get rid of my studio and start working in public. I started building things on the street for people to use, so that I would be, in a sense, less lonely.

Indeed, faculty in this study were embedded in a public, often in many publics, and felt growth from that experience. Being in relationship in this way scaffolded and buoyed both their strategic actions and perspectives.

Enabling Conditions: Institutional—"They Really Set the Table for This"

Sociological research on human agency reminds us that individuals are embedded in social context. That is, they have identities and roles in specific settings that influence their sense of agency. For this study, I asked participants which factors operating in their work settings or work lives enabled their sense of agency and which were acting as barriers. The results were both consistent with previous studies, and surprising, bringing

light to some ways in which higher education organizations can and do facilitate agency in civic work that are rarely discussed.

"They leave us alone," or Autonomy. All of the participants in this study were faculty members, though one was also a director of a center for community engagement. In most cases, participants talked about the benefits of the autonomy they enjoyed in their work lives. This autonomy took the form of freedom to make pedagogical choices and to design the classes the way they wanted, which allowed them to reshape them into engaged teaching and learning experiences. It also included teaching loads that left time for research and professional service, which allowed them to do community-based research. Perhaps greatest of all though, it was a general sense of autonomy that they were granted, as Sullivan (2005) observes as professionals, in acknowledgement of their expertise and of their commitment to service in a profession. This general sense of autonomy was something that attracted these faculty members to academic life, and it was also something that allowed their civic work to flourish.

Many faculty began their discussion of autonomy with the classes that they were able to choose, design, and teach. For example, Jennifer observed: "I've had a lot of liberty, too … as far as choosing the classes that I teach and designing the classes that I teach." Participants were also enabled by the freedom in the research aspects of their lives. For example, Laura observed the freedom she had within her research appointment: "So, in order to align some of the work I was doing with my appointment, my appointment was actually switched at [institution]. So, now I am 50 percent teaching, about 25 percent research, and then about 25 percent teaching research. I'm very free to

do essentially whatever I would like to do in that 25 percent teaching research." She went on to note: "I spend a lot of effort writing proposals, which some people might consider research, but it is really, essentially, a practice piece that's not anywhere in my job description. But I still feel like I have enough latitude in my job to really focus on that."

Overall, though there was a clear sentiment that while most of these universities were not able to support engagement as the participants would have liked, either by reward systems or resources, faculty did enjoy autonomy to do the work they wanted to do. Mike reflected: "We don't get any release time, we don't get any sort of funding, basically they just leave us alone, and that's not so bad."

This finding about the benefits of autonomy for civic engagement are important for several reasons. First, more than 80 percent of faculty regularly report the autonomy that they are granted in their work as one of the main things that attracted them to academe and the area of greatest satisfaction (Gappa, Austin, and Trice 2007). It could be argued that in higher education, as well as many other professions there are efforts at work to make more individuals "managed professionals" (Rhoades 1998) as opposed to individuals with this professional autonomy. In fact, the reward system, which for most of the participants was the tenure and promotion process, will be discussed as a barrier in this study. However, that is not the whole story. The culture of relative autonomy for faculty enables public work. It acts as a fertilizer for some very creative and important starting points mentioned earlier.

"Saying yes": Support from Key Academic Leaders and Department Chairs. Being left alone by itself is not enabling to engagement. Engaged faculty need other kinds of structural and cultural supports from their higher education institutions and from a community. Jonah described having been supported wholesale by his executive leadership. He observed: "I'm able to deliver, but I can't tell you how important it was—they really set the table for this." This meant specifically that they provided resources and office space, they created flexibility with the creation of new classes, and they provided cover in political situations. While Jonah described significant independent work done to set the table or pave the way for his engagement work, most other faculty described this enabling support as faculty asking for things and administrators finding ways to say yes.

Jennifer recalled:

> When I applied for the grant, I met with the chair, and asked if I could use a portion of the funding to buy out my time, and he was fine with that, so for example there were a couple of semesters where I wasn't required to teach a class, but it was understood that I'd be doing lots of other things. Again, it's a really resource rich environment. When I arrived I was given a discretionary account that was very generous, and I've used that for lots of things but have needed to rely on that for transportation for students back and forth to [city], which becomes—I mean, it's only 30 miles away, but when you've got lots of students going back and forth it's tens of thousands of dollars through the year, and the department's been really supportive with that piece, with providing the transportation.

In this example, Jennifer's work is being enabled by the availability of resources, which are important but as we know not available in every institution. What is more important seems to be the willingness of the department chair to divert these resources toward her engaged work when she asked. In Kaela's case we likewise see this support from a department chair and how important it is to her, but we also see how the act of saying yes, gives her a sense of agency about asking for more the next time. She said:

> The chair of my department has been 100 percent supportive of me and the things I ask permission to do, applying for grants and trying new classes, and like I told you, I piloted a course. It takes a chair who is willing to take that risk, and she's been more than willing. I started small in the beginning, and I proved successful in some of the things I did, so each time I sort of ask for a little bit more. But my chair has been supportive.

Resources, Flexibility, Reward System Policies. The faculty in this study told many stories about the kinds of tangible support provided to support their work. Most involved funding for transportation, funding to support personnel to assist with projects, or release time for specific projects. However, there were also some unusual and creative arrangements made that are important to highlight because they were very important to the engaged faculty in this study.

One such example of stepping outside the box of how universities support engagement was the creation of a separate nonprofit to support the work. In Jonah's case, with the help of executive leadership, he was able to create a separate nonprofit structure adjacent to, but not part of his university. He said:

> If I didn't have this separate 501(c)3, I think it would be much harder for me to raise money for these efforts, because everything would have to go through the advancement office. You know, I'm not allowed to go to [corporation] and ask for $20,000 for the center, because the [institution] is in the process of asking them for $1,000,000. I'm just an annoyance to their university fundraising efforts. But because I have that separate nonprofit, I can raise money from whoever I want for that. It's just housed at the university.

He also noted that while many college and university presidents and provosts might not want a faculty member or center to collaborate with other institutions on big projects, so as not to share the credit or resources, his executive leadership were "thoughtful enough to let me reach out to other universities, so we can be a statewide, concerted effort and the results can be bigger."

Additionally, some innovative attempts to change workload policy to integrate engagement into appointments better were scattered throughout the participants' stories. Some faculty were on joint appointments, and others had created centers that enabled their public work. Also, one campus had put a new process in place, by which faculty presented a work plan of all of their goals for the year (related to teaching, research, and engagement) and received feedback on it by colleagues. Some campuses had worked engagement into core areas of promotion and tenure policies or ways for faculty to develop and submit public scholarship portfolios. One campus had instituted a $5,000 base-salary raise for faculty who excelled in engagement and teaching. While these initiatives may seem mostly symbolic, they were incredibly appreciated by engaged scholars who observed that they sent powerful messages across campus that the institution valued public work.

Bridge Personnel: Directors of Service Learning and Community Engagement. Almost all of the participants in this study mentioned the support that they received from directors of service learning and engagement on their campuses. It is interesting to observe that in no case were these individuals the reason that participants became involved to begin with. However, they did seem very closely tied into a network or web of continual support. These individuals assisted with practical issues, such as transportation for students, funding opportunities, and connecting to national service-learning and engagement networks. There were differences in the kinds of support that faculty observed were most helpful, which seemed to be related to career stage.

Kaela, who is pre-tenure, observed:

> The service-learning initiative at our university has provided me with funding, as well as with guidance. The woman who runs the service-learning initiative has been very useful to me in guiding me and offering me advice on doing the work I wanted to do. The funding was necessary, I'd say, too, so little bits of funding that they were able to offer me was important. We also have—the college of arts and sciences has a community engagement person. She comes out of the [name of discipline] department, and she's offered me a lot of advice and direction, as well. There's no funding there, but there's a support person who knows the university and knows the structure and knows what it takes to make these things happen at our university. So, she's been very useful.

For Laura, who is mid-career, the director was helpful in other ways. The director was helpful in telling others about the work and generally being supportive rather than providing advice.

> I would say what has been supporting it tremendously at [institution] has been our center. [Name of SL director] runs that shop and has for years, and I always say I need to start paying her publicity fees. She is absolutely a tremendous supporter of me, of many people around the campus. I feel like service learning has really taken hold at the university, in large part because of her efforts over the past dozen years or so. So, in terms of facilitation, that's very helpful.

Interestingly, the success of many of the engaged scholars and many of their career stages being mid and late career meant that they had themselves become the support for other faculty on their campus. Jonah also played this role as the director of a center:

> Since we've been there, the ones that are interested in it are really grateful for our help and for the acknowledgement, and we help facilitate letters from the president and the provost to all the faculty that are doing this cool stuff and help them personalize letters. It sounds sort of cheesy and small, but it makes a big damn difference.

Support from Networks Inside and Outside Higher Education. Most of the faculty in this study had also experienced learning communities and faculty fellows programs on campus that connected them to other engaged scholars and made them feel that the campus supported their work. There were important supports, both financially and

interpersonally, from outside university walls, as well. Laura's story was particularly illustrative of both strong interpersonal and strong structural support:

> I feel like I've had a lot of help outside of [institution]. The school system, the school board, we all have to essentially work together. There's a company that the school system subcontracts with, and they do all the maintenance of grounds for all the schools. The guy in charge of that had a daughter who broke her arm on a monkey bar that wasn't surfaced—in other words didn't have that material under and around it to break falls. Well, he made it his personal mission to make sure that all of the equipment at all of the schools was surfaced properly. I did not know him when we built our first playground in the school system, but we met right after that, and he essentially said, "If you can get the money together for equipment, I will find the money in my budget to surface your stuff for free," which is about 25 percent of your budget. And he has come through every time. He and his workers have donated, come out, paid for probably $100,000 worth of stuff over the past 10 years. I always call him my angel. That essentially facilitates what we do.

The Profile of Engagement on Campus and Mission. Laura described a very difficult tenure process but observed that when she went up for full professor the profile of engagement work on the campus had grown considerably and this itself helped her case move through. She said:

> And I went with service learning as a focus. I went with both service learning/community engagement and with research, and I had no problem, and I mean none. Not a single issue—I sailed. I actually think that service learning had a much higher profile when I went up for full professor than when it did even when I was going from assistant to associate. The knowledge base and the interest in service learning at [institution] was a different picture between 2001 and 2006.

In addition to profile on campus, about half of the participants in the study mentioned some specific aspect of institutional mission as a facilitator of their work. For example, Mike observed: "Of course, the mission of the college, or the two colleges I've worked for, to get students involved in the surrounding community, it includes that component, anyway. So it is fully consistent with the college."

Being Involved in National Associations and Disciplinary Networks Committed to Engagement. Finally, engaged faculty noted that there were disciplinary networks that enabled their public work in important ways. For example, Mike observed:

> The larger discipline of political science … I have participated in several round tables and panels and stuff at the American Political Science Association Annual convention, but other than that . . .well, I guess I shouldn't say. There is a lot of information out there, lots of publications now available for this kind of work through the discipline.

Other participants mentioned participating in enabling networks facilitated by Kettering Foundation, Imagining America, Campus Compact, and the American Democracy Project of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Frustrations and Challenges

Many scholars, including me, have discussed the problems of college and university reward systems with regard to faculty community engagement (O'Meara 2002; O'Meara 2011). Boyte (2008) has described the norms of academe that require engaged faculty to have to "swim upstream," or against the current. to do the work they want to do, often at risk of not being tenured or promoted. I have explored the values and beliefs about the nature of scholarship, one's role as a professional, peer review, collaboration, and impact that permeate reward systems, even in teaching-focused colleges (O'Meara 2002; 2011). These themes were often repeated in the stories told by engaged faculty about their work. At the end of the section some of these barriers are described. However, I lead with the disabling conditions that civically engaged faculty experienced more personally first. Despite such conditions, engaged faculty were resilient, defiant, and

clearly in this work for more than university accolades. They engaged in strategic actions and held strategic perspectives toward public work regardless.

"Having to disappear for awhile… to the backroom." Many early-career participants talked about the fact the dominant reward system they lived under meant they had to pull themselves away from the work they thought was most important in order to write. For example, Jennifer said:

> The tension around the reward system is a big one. I mean, it's just kind of looming, and there's no easy way around it. One of my close friends and mentors who worked turned to me two or three years into this partnership and said, "You need to make research out of the [name of city] work." So, for two or three years—the early years, I was very much following the research course that I had laid out that involved massive data sets, multiple regression analysis, sort of paralleling the doctoral work I had done. It didn't have anything to do with civic engagement. In fact, it was quite the opposite—what can I figure out in the back room and come out and say to the world? And at the same time, I was really intentionally keeping my involvement with [city] to a minimum for the first two or three years, not trying to scale it up, not trying to make it larger or write grants to bring it to life. But I was getting nudged by—more than nudged—I was getting pushed by community partners, who were saying, "Look, you can't come in once a year with a practicum class for 14 weeks and then disappear. That doesn't work for us. Semesters are not the way the real world works. And either you're going to make a commitment to continuity (that's what we call it now), to have a relationship with us in the summer and during spring break and be involved in real time, or it's just not going to work."

The "Mine" Culture of Academe. Another barrier described by faculty was the tendency in the general culture against collaboration. While engaged faculty observed that this was a general operating norm, it was even true among many of their colleagues involved in engagement. Jennifer observed:

> But still, this barrier of isolation is there, in a way. Even the faculty who are engaged are not engaged with me. They're engaged with institutions in [city] and students at [institution], and they're running their own program that's connected to [institution]. But as far as collaborating with faculty, that's still not happening.

> So, I don't know if it's a barrier, but it's certainly a problem for me. It's something I keep working to change. But the paradigm of, "I've got to be able to point to something that's mine," is what persists.

Envy. As is common across many organizations, as engaged faculty became more successful and received positive press and accolades for their work, whether through awards or grants or on-campus press, they also attracted some envy from colleagues. This envy was tied to administrators supporting their projects and work with grants, release time, and office space. Mostly, such envy simply made for bad colleague relationships with those who felt it, though in some extreme cases it resulted in opposition to tenure or colleagues blocking new courses from being approved. For example, Jonah observed:

> I feel like we've engendered, just from day one, we've engendered a little bit of resentment. Some faculty think I'm treated much too well. It's sort of unfair, that office space we have. Different departments were submitting applications for that office space. Then they offered it to me in the interview, so I came into the campus having some people just resent me.

Business-as-Usual Administrative Blockades. The selection process for this study meant that those interviewed were among the most successful and productive of those involved in public work. That is, these were people trying to do "big things." Their partnerships were trying to attract major donors and often complete projects in short time periods. Their work was reactionary as well as long-term, meaning that they often wanted to respond to a particular problem that arose in the community fast, as well as address long-term issues. As a result, one of the barriers these engaged faculty faced was red tape in the way of university and college rules and procedures that either completely blockaded a project or slowed it down considerably. Laura's story of trying to navigate both funding and liability issues was especially descriptive of such challenges: "I think there are

mechanisms inside the university and outside the university that really facilitate the work, but I can tell you, and I get really frustrated about this, the thwarting piece—I struggle mightily with liability issues and with proposal funding issues, and I think it's because the university is set up for 'normal,' 'typical' teaching and research work."

She went on to explain that she spends a lot of time working around her university's rules and tendency to say no. She said:

> So, I spend a lot of time being told no and figuring out how to address the no. Usually, I can, because most people at [institution] are very willing to serve, and the staff are very willing to work with you, and I've had to work long and hard with the Office of Risk Management to get a liability policy put in place, and I have a million dollar liability policy for myself, just in case. So, there's all these things I've had to do, and I don't mind doing them, but when you fight and fight and work and work and you still can't get your stuff through it's frustrating.

Participants also made the point that the academic year and semester system was not convenient for working with community partners and this was often disabling as their projects were often curtailed when students left at the end of a semester. In addition, participants mentioned artificial barriers put up between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs that limited their work.

What Counts as Legitimate Scholarship. As has been found in many cases, engaged scholars noted that the dominant assumptions, values, and beliefs about scholarship and scholarly work in their departments worked against engagement and their public work. For example, Laura said: "I think that there's a tendency for a lot of people to see service learning as touchy-feely stuff that's not scholarly, that's not rigorous, etc., so I think there's just a blanket assumption, not by everyone, but many, that service learning is not scholarly. And essentially, people are going to hold that view until you can prove to them

that it is scholarly." Other participants mentioned that the fact public work often involved public policy scholarship, interdisciplinary and qualitative work also hurt its chances in reward systems. Still others mentioned that in the context of engaged scholarship expected numbers of publications were difficult to manage.

Previous Relationships with Community Gone Bad. Some participants observed that prior relationships between their university and their community partners could get in the way of genuine trust and a positive working relationship. Kaela said:

> The community's perspective—that perspective of being attacked by the university, if we're couching it in a process of doing good for them. They're sort of attacked by the university in multiple ways. And there have been a lot of failed projects, and so when I step in and want to do a project, those failures that have come before me are going to color that initial relationship, so it's bigger than my relationship with the community. I'm representing [the institution] in a way and trying to change that perception of us doing bad for them.

Striving. Several participants also mentioned the striving nature of their university cultures as a barrier, especially those at public institutions, who felt that the teaching and engagement mission were being thrown overboard for research aspirations.

Response to Institutional Barriers: Accommodate, Negotiate, Ignore, Play

The 25 engaged scholars in this study had several different kinds of reactions to the barriers they faced in their public work. Depending on the kind of barrier they faced, they would either find a way to accommodate it, negotiate with it, ignore it, or play with it. Both Bloomgarden (2008) and Ward (2010) have found similar results in their studies of exemplar engaged faculty. In all cases, these faculty seemed to be most conscious of

the choices they were making and why. Each of these strategies was part of an agentic set of actions and perspectives.

Negotiation was a common tactic. The faculty in this study were very good negotiators, often successful in negotiating for resources and needed supports. It also became evident that many of them have become adept with multiple responses to barriers, even using them in contingency or succession. In considering his response to barriers Mike said:

> Well, I think the thing is you just have to ignore them, frankly, and we always find ourselves trying to fly below the radar. We say that to each other all the time, we want to fly below the radar so the administration doesn't even know what we are doing. That happens all too often, I'm sorry to say. Now, occasionally you can't fall below the radar, so we have to negotiate. As a matter of fact, we negotiated a budget, a budgeting process that allowed us to continue what we are doing with potential administration here at [institution]. We have our own budget, on a budget line where they fund us, whatever money we can raise … we have our, I forget the terminology for it, but it's a budget category that doesn't get emptied every year. It's an ongoing budget category, that whatever we put into there, nobody touches it. So, most budgets in the college they empty every year back into the general fund, and then you start over again, but that doesn't happen to us. That was one way that we were able to negotiate with the administration to make it possible for us to do this.

In this response we hear both strategic actions and perspectives at play. There are some barriers strategically ignored (perspective) and some budgets strategically negotiated (actions).

In the following excerpt Jennifer describes how she has a philosophy of "playing" with the barriers that she comes across, which as interviewer I reflected on, as well in asking her to expand on how she does this. When asked about barriers Jennifer replied:

> I like to play with them and confront them, but I see it more as a little bit like playing with them. Confrontation, for me, sort of means that someone wins or someone loses, or that it's more of an argument, or people take sides. And playing with them, for me, feels like we might come together, and we might learn something. So, it's confrontation in sort of a playful way, I guess. I think about

> my case as an instrument for action as much as I do the practicum or the thesis. I see it as there are all of these obsolete artifacts lying around the place, and if I can pick them up and turn them around and look at them a different way and maybe convince someone else to play that game with me, that a new type of conversation will occur and that that conversation might instigate a small step in a different direction.

As interviewer I then said: "This idea of playfulness gives you some distance from the barrier in a way that the dichotomous win/lose paradigm doesn't. It allows you to take yourself a little less seriously. I like that image. It's got a bunch of different sides to it. Have you won, ever?"

Jennifer replied:

> Yes. I found "friends" to play with. Around the thesis—you know, I've played with the practicum a lot, and it started to not feel fun for me, because it was just like, "Play with this. This is an instrument that is powerful and works, and we all have to do it anyway. I've learned so much. Let me share this. Let me teach you some of these things." And folks were like, "That's not a toy. I'm not interested. I'm just going to kind of play with my own toys, over here." But the thesis has really started to draw some attention in the sandbox. Folks are coming over and asking, "I see you're doing really interesting things with that thesis instrument. Can you tell us a little bit about that?" and "I want to do that, too." So, I've made a lot of headway around that particular instrument.

As interviewer I observed: "It also seems to me, then, that 'playing' is leadership. You role model something." She agreed with some modesty, "perhaps."

Each of these strategies seemed to operate flexibly depending on how big and what kind of barrier it was (e.g. they usually ignored envy). Yet "little pushes" as Kaela referred to them, or even larger struggles described previously took their toll on the engaged scholars.

Laura observed that the toll it took was in part because it meant she had to work to change the campus at the same time that she wanted to be spending time working with the community and they could be competing interests. She said:

> We are trying to change that. We do have a meeting with the provost in a couple of weeks, but it just takes time, and it's a slow process, and all the time I spend on that stops me from moving forward with what's really important to me, which is working with the community, teaching the students, getting the [projects] designed, and getting them put out there.

Also, accommodation to norms often meant scholars working twice as hard to do double the number of publications, exhibits, and projects to meet the expectations of different constituencies. In fact, several engaged scholars pointed out that they did not "take on" the reward system, they just did the expected amount of traditional scholarship and the engaged work and were "left alone" because of it. Some engaged scholars also found that having external funding for their projects gave them additional social and political capital in their negotiations that other engaged faculty did not have. In this way, social and political capital fueled their sense of agency.

Looking Ahead: The New Normal

An ongoing question throughout this project was the degree to which faculty civic work today, especially in the younger generation of scholars, represents a sea change or movement of sorts to change higher education and its relationship with public work. To what degree are the individuals doing this work with such passion changing higher education so there might be a "new normal"? As such, participants were asked whether they thought something was happening here that was bigger than just themselves and a few close colleagues. The results were mixed.

"I don't know… there is a real divide." On one hand, the faculty involved in this study noted that they had a limited perspective. From their perch they knew many faculty on

their campus doing such work and feeling restless and unsatisfied with the status quo. They also had a national network of folks in their disciplines doing public work. But several noted that they felt unqualified, or unable to tell whether this represented a movement per se, especially because they also knew faculty who were doing more traditional kinds of work and were quite satisfied. They also saw countervailing forces, such as institutional striving, doctoral training still emphasizing traditional disciplinary scholarship, and retrenchment of innovative thinking in the face of budget cuts.

The following reflection by Laura notes this mixed review of the movement. She said:

> I can speak for myself to say I am extremely dissatisfied with the norms that stop me from doing what I would like to do with the work that I'm doing with community engagement. You know, I have my students write grant proposals, and they're funded, and according to the university, they're not allowed to be PIs. It's me, and if I didn't write a word, that's stupid. It's essentially the same thing if we have a community partner. You know, if we write a proposal together, academe—everyone's concerned about, "Well, what part did you write, and how much is coming to us? How much money is coming to us?" So, personally, yes, I feel pretty dissatisfied with those norms. If I look around the campus, I'm not sure if I really see that so much, and I feel like I have a pretty good feeling for service learning, and I'm going to hypothesize that maybe the reason is that even now, a lot of the faculty that are doing service learning are assistant professors and are so focused on making sure that they can make tenure and make it over that hump that maybe they're not focused so much on the broader issues yet, if that makes sense. So, I think that there is dissatisfaction there, but I would not personally, at least not down here, call it a revolution on this campus.

As such, this question perplexed about 10 of the 25 scholars, who wondered aloud whether the perspectives and actions they and their colleagues are taking could be considered a movement, pushing higher education collectively toward greater public purposes. However, more of the faculty did see the movement growing, and more of the general facts about higher education pushing toward greater public work. This is described in the next section.

"There's something happening where people are willing to take the risk." A majority of the engaged faculty saw something happening and saw themselves as part of a collective movement, whether on their campuses, in their generation of scholars, or in their disciplines. They noted ways in which disciplines and research are changing to include more collaborative participatory methods, general education is embracing new goals for engaged teaching and learning, and institutions are building partnerships into strategic plans. They also saw the newest entrants to academe pushing for this type of change from the inside; a group of individuals with different priorities and thirst for connection of their civic and professional lives than earlier generations.

One positive sign that a movement of faculty more interested in public work is happening was the observation by engaged scholars that their disciplines are beginning to change. They are being invaded by individuals willing to take the risk to do the work and are trying to change their discipline's acceptance of it. For example, Jennifer said:

> I think that's true in my discipline, I think I can say with confidence. And anecdotally, I've got a little story that provides some evidence, I suppose. So, we have our academic conference every year, and for the first time in seven or eight years, [name of engaged scholar in her discipline] and others who have been doing some engagement work had a round table. They organized a round table, and they hadn't done that at this particular conference in the past, because it was somewhat frowned upon as a way of doing work. And the turnout was phenomenal, and the turnout was primarily tenure-track, untenured faculty, who were doing this work knowing that it wasn't the road to tenure. And these are folks that are really interested in tenure, but we had assigned tasks—there were dozens of us, and there was something going on there. There's something happening where people are willing to take the risk. They know that it may not bring them where they think they want to go, but they can't resist the civic impulse, I suppose.

Defiant, not Malleable. Throughout the interviews with engaged scholars I also became very aware of the resilience and determination of this group. They were going to be involved in public work, no matter what higher education did. One example of this was when Kaela explained that she has never been "malleable," either during her doctoral training or in her work at the university. Rather, she sought out a field, a doctoral advisor, and a position where she could do this work. She said: "I looked for a doctoral advisor who I knew would support what I wanted to do. I went in knowing what I wanted to do. But I think there's a sense that grad students are very malleable, and I never realized that, because I wasn't. I was pretty set in what I wanted to do." Likewise, when responding to questions about barriers not one scholar considered turning back, rather they found different ways to overcome them. Most were extremely successful at creating those pathways.

Creating New Ways of Being… a Scholar, a Teacher, a Colleague, a Partner, an Institution. The ways in which these engaged scholars strategically and intentionally created new ways of being in higher education and in the world were perhaps the most encouraging points of analysis for those who view engaged scholarship as a movement. In one example a faculty member described how he was pushing the top journals in his fields to see and acknowledge the rigor of participatory scholarship. In another example a participant noted that as she went along she was "creating the structure the university needs to do this." Another noted she was pushing the university to think differently and another discussed at length how she was trying to help her colleagues see her work differently for promotion and tenure. All of the participants reveled in creating new

relationships with students as colleagues and pushing their thinking and who they might become. While Kaela called such work "little pushes," they were having a major impact.

Areas for Future Research and Conclusion

This study revealed the starting points and turning points for engaged scholars, the influences that were formative in shaping a sense of civic agency and public purpose. I also think the study was effective in drawing out key enabling and disabling conditions for faculty doing public work. The concept of agency as strategic action and perspective taking (O'Meara, Campbell, and Terosky 2011) was an effective lens with which to view these cases. This distinct sample of civically engaged faculty all possessed a sort of strategic optimism. I say optimism rather than idealism because while there were strong humanistic civic and moral values displayed, they were not naïve. Rather they had carved out spaces for real contributions and were making them tangibly.

I see three key areas for future research building from the analysis in this report. First, in this study I was able to begin to identify characteristics of faculty civic agency and the public work in which they were engaged. However, I think further research and thinking is needed to draw out the aspects of this civic agency in action that are most able to be passed on, socialized toward, role modeled, and built into cultures and structures. For example, how we can take what we know about faculty civic agency in action and create faculty development programs that strategically facilitate its growth? How can more faculty experience the sort of civic agency these faculty have? How can they be more strategic in the choices they are making?

Second, the dual ideas of belonging and loneliness embedded in faculty stories of their public work present new research opportunities. How do the norms of academic culture isolate and separate individuals from their civic identities and from relationships with students, colleagues, and community partners? What is being done, and can be done, in structures and cultures to change this and make relationship building part of all faculty roles? It was particularly poignant to hear junior faculty talk about having to "disappear for awhile" and "go to the back room" in order to remain employed at their universities. In both images they were leaving the place they thought they could be most useful and engaged to go back to a place they were not sure mattered. This back room physically separated them from individuals and issues they cared about. Alternatively those faculty heavily invested in public work through centers and partnerships were anything but isolated—they belonged somewhere and this feeling of belonging was a major source of civic agency. They had someplace to fall back on when mistakes were made. In addition, there was a strong epistemological component to the engaged approach that assumes learning in relationship. I would very much like to conduct further research that probes how public work is, in many ways, faculty "reaching for the world" and the influence of that for various stakeholders.

A third area for future research relates to the effects of strategies used by engaged scholars in navigating higher education to do their public work. Some used their autonomy to fly under the radar, essentially ignoring the rest of their institution and creating their own bridges to the public. Some faculty are doing both traditional and public work and publishing their scholarship in different places. Others are pushing those traditional places to publish their work. Some engaged scholars are quietly role modeling

in departments and enticing others to join; others are creating university centers and structures and new programs. What are the effects of these different strategies on overall culture change at these institutions? Also, what are the effects of these different strategies for living a well-integrated life, where faculty do not have to leave their civic identities at the entrance to their workplaces? How do some "navigational strategies" reinforce or strengthen dysfunctional norms, and how do others take them on? This line of inquiry is connected to Boyte's (2010) work on how norms in American life have left the workplace out of potential locations for citizenship. How do some of these strategies allow faculty to live their civic identities as part of their work and others maintain the separation between work and citizenship?

In conclusion, it was an intriguing and exciting process to collect the stories of these 25 engaged faculty and consider their meaning. As I did, I found myself reflecting on the work of many Kettering colleagues, such as Harry Boyte, Scott Peters, Al Dzur, and Peggy Shaffer. At the same time, I felt that this group had some new and fresh perspectives I had not heard that reinforced my sense of optimism that not only will this work continue but that gradually over time, it could become the new normal.

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