Evaluating the Health of Community/University Partnerships: Experiential Learning Practice with an Aim Toward the Public Good

HANNAH LUBAR (iD)

LAURIE MARKS (iD)

Author affiliations can be found in the back matter of this article

ABSTRACT

This article looks at campus and community partner relationships, and how they can be assessed. Specifically, readers will find the results of a case study that explores the "health" of the relationship between an urban university and its local nonprofit partners. Additionally, the Community Partnership Health Assessment Framework (CPHAF) is introduced, which is a six-step process that practitioners engaged in service learning, internships aimed at the public good, and volunteer programs can use to evaluate the "health" of their relationships with community partners for community-based learning (CBL). For our current purpose, CBL includes academic service learning, internships, and volunteer work, however the CPHAF process is a general evaluation framework. A general tool is valuable because many universities have partnerships where students arrive from various programs such as volunteers, service learners, interns, or other. The discussion section provides a detailed description of the Community Partnership Health Assessment Framework (CPHAF), and the case study is provided as an example of its use.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

LAURIE MARKS

UW-Milwaukee, US

lmarks@uwm.edu

INTRODUCTION

The future for institutions of higher education is uncertain due to a converging mix of challenges such as demographic shifts resulting in lower enrollments, declining state investment and tuition freezes, a public questioning of the purpose and value of a college degree, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic that put strain on revenue generating operations such as housing and dining services (London, 2015; Nietzel, 2020). With these forces at play, many universities are thinking strategically about how to recruit students and ensure a meaningful college-going experience that leads to good outcome for graduates. One route has been through deepening experiential learning options, including those aimed at the public good such as service learning and nonprofit internships. To be successful in this endeavor colleges are evaluating the health of relationships they lean into for the dual purpose of applied student learning and to fulfill their civic mission. The data gathered from examining these relationships can be used for continuous program improvement, accreditation reporting, Carnegie classification applications, deepening student learning and professional networks, building community partner identity as co-educators, and providing partners a space to share their perceptions, innovations, and methods.

The purpose of this article is two-fold. One goal is to introduce the Community Partner Health Assessment Framework (CPHAF) which is a tool offering a systematic pathway through which campuses can assess the health of their partnerships with nonprofit agencies where students engage in community-based learning for the public good. The tool is used directly with community partners in order to involve their feedback in partnership and program improvements. Second, the results of a study which utilized the framework are revealed in the form of a case study. This case study method and findings serve as an example of the CPHAF process and how to best use the results to either make change or continue aspects of partnerships that are working well. The latter outcome may result as the CPHAF process is continuously implemented over time, as it may begin to serve as a "temperature check" on established and ongoing partnerships. The case study iteration attempts to gather the community partner perspective on two broad questions. First, in what ways do the values of the institution regarding civic engagement translate into action when campus stakeholders collaborate with the community partners? And second, from the community partner perspective, in what ways does the relationship between the campus and organization continue to be synergistic, useful, and worthwhile for the agency, and what changes should be made?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much, and little, has been written about the relationships between institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations where students engage in various forms of community-based learning such as internships and academic service learning. The benefits to students are well understood to include better retention rates, stronger critical thinking skills, enhanced personal development, and higher levels of engagement and satisfaction (Astin et al., 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kearney, 2013). While much is known about the benefits and outcomes of community-based learning for students, a critique highlighting the dearth in community partner perspective has also been revealed (Cruz & Giles, 2000). As a result of this critique, more research now includes the perspective of community partners who host students in community-based learning positions, but there is still more to explore. A primary theme of this literature suggests that in many cases community partners are exploited in favor of campus needs such as specific learning goals or adherence to the academic calendar. Despite this, benefits for the partners are also recognized and include an increase in organizational capacity, access to campus resources and expertise, and intangible benefits associated with the prestige and resources of institutions of higher education, or IHE (Birdsall, 2005; Sandy & Holland, 2006).

Community engagement professionals and faculty who work closely with community partners recognize the synergistic relationship, noting that many of the benefits that the community partners enjoy are also realized by the campus. For example, as the community partner has more access to the campus resources and expertise, so goes the IHE's access to the community's resources and practitioner expertise by offering both a physical and pedagogical space for a classroom-outside-of-the-classroom. Further, partnerships connected to service learning, internships, and other forms of experiential learning can evolve into better access to research partnerships, chances to test theories in practice, and the ability to brand the university as a community-engaged institution. Finally, community partners often note that as a result of student service there is an increase in organizational capacity, while universities simultaneously identify gains related to the student learning, connectedness, and overall satisfaction with their educational experience.

Taking a step back, when considering the relationship between institutions of higher education and community partners, it is important to first consider what constitutes a "partnership." This issue has been interrogated by Bringle, Clayton, and Price (2009) who argue that the broadness of the term "community-university partnership" (CUP) makes it difficult to examine for impact or outcomes because it lacks

specificity in important ways. For example, who do the terms "campus" and "community" represent? Students, faculty, administrators, staff, nonprofit professionals, agency clients, or others? Despite this, the nomenclature of community university partnerships remains useful for two reasons. First, it is recognizable to those working inside the civic engagement field but also those outside the field including university administrators, nonprofit professionals, students, and the general public. Second, and for the purposes of this article, this challenge can be addressed by creating parameters that better establish a working definition in the context of community-based learning.

The literature reveals that most research on community partner perspective has the limitations associated with case study methodology such as small numbers of participants. Another significant limitation is that there is a very real barrier to generalizability because of other factors such as regional culture differences, the varied depth and breadth of partnerships based on an institution's history, type, and mission, and the diversity of local needs when contrasting rural, urban, and suburban contexts. With these limitations in mind, the authors offer a case study example to provide an applied look at how the framework presented might work in a real-world context, and does not purport or attempt to overcome the limitations of a case study methodology. The CPHAF is offered as an applied, adaptive tool that allows institutions a process for collecting partner perspective systematically and considering it against the values of the campus. The CPHAF provides a path to consider the goals and values of the institution and connect them to existing written blueprints that have been devised and considered within the community engagement field.

There have been several projects that give meaningful ideas as to how to develop and assess partnerships too. For example, Teeters and Jurow (2019) developed a five-step framework for developing equity-oriented research partnerships. Sandy and Holland (2006) did in-depth interviews of campus community partners in California and added an unheard voice to this complex, boundary-spanning work. While their framework is on the development and sustaining of partnerships versus the evaluation of existing long-term partnerships, it still offers insight. One of the primary goals here is to offer the CPHAF in light of these challenges so that universities have a tool for evaluating the health of their relationships with nonprofit partners engaged in community-based learning programs.

METHOD

This methods section outlines the approach to one university's case study exploring the "health" of its relationship with local nonprofit partners, using the

Community Partnership Health Assessment Framework (CPHAF), which is introduced in detail in the discussion section. The study was conducted at a large, urban, R1 access institution in the Midwest. 20 community partners who represented a variety of issue areas within the nonprofit community such as environmental organizations, youth development agencies, elder care facilities, and those addressing issues of hunger and poverty were invited to participate in the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved study. Ultimately the case study included nine community partners who regularly host students for community-based learning placement. Criteria was set for which partners to invite to participate and included (a) an ongoing relationship of greater than three years where the agency hosted students for community-based learning, (b) specified roles agreed upon by both stakeholders, (c) regular communication between the collaborators, and (d) a loose commitment to supporting each other's missions, program goals, and strategic directions in ways that honor flexibility and evolving needs.

Semi-formal interviews were conducted at the offices of the community partners. These interviews included eleven questions aimed at the broader research questions of "In what ways do the values of the institution translate into action when campus stakeholders engage with the community partners? And, from the community partner perspective, in what ways does the relationship between the campus and organization continue to be synergistic, impactful, and worthwhile for the agency, and what changes should be made?" As participants responded to interview questions (outlined in detail below), the interviewer paraphrased responses back and asked for clarification as needed in order to maintain accurate understanding. Additionally, both researchers involved in the process listened to the recordings of the interviews and read through the transcribed interviews to clarify feedback, ideas, and contributions. Had there been confusion or a need for further clarification, researchers would have reached out to partners; however, the straightforward nature of the responses did not warrant such follow-up. As a final eye toward triangulation, coding by both researchers yielded the same categories and themes.

The centralized community engagement office at the university in the case study loosely utilizes the *Stanford University Principles of Ethical and Effective Service* (Stanford University Hass Center, 2019) as guiding ideas for training members of the campus community in ways to engage with the nonprofit agency. These principles also ground and drive the assessment of the health of CUP's related community-based learning aimed at the public good. The center utilizes the *Stanford University Principles of Ethical and Effective Service* (Stanford University, 2019) as a philosophical positioning of how campus stakeholders should approach the relationship

with community partner organizations. These principles include humility, respect and inclusion, reciprocity, preparation, safety and well-being, accountability, evaluation, and learning and reflection. These guiding principles were used to craft interview questions and then later to code partners' interviews. This set of principles was selected because much of the messaging and training to both students and faculty who are being introduced to community-engaged programs and efforts echoes the themes. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, principles are "a moral rule or belief that helps you know what is right and wrong and that influences your actions" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2021). Based on the Stanford Principles, these guiding ideas, and the broader research questions, the following open-ended questions were created to see if training around the principles translates into action.

- Describe ways, if any, in which the partnership between the agency and the university affects outcomes for your organization.
- Describe ways, if any, in which you believe this partnership affects student learning.
- Describe students' demeanor and behavior while they are serving at your agency.
- Describe faculty and staff's demeanor and behavior in interactions you have with them.
- In what ways, if any, has this partnership established mutually agreed upon roles, norms, and processes?
- What is your perception of the university's commitment to your agency and clients?
- What is your agency's commitment to the university and student learning?
- Are you getting out of this partnership what you have needed in the past and currently need? If your needs have changed, how has the campus responded?
- In what ways were students prepared to serve at your agency? In what ways were they not prepared?
- In what ways did the university help you prepare to manage working with students?
- In what ways do you educate the campus community in your role as a nonprofit community partner? What methods do you use to educate members of the campus community about the issues you work on?

Once questions were set and partners were identified, outreach communication began. A graduate student from another university was a research partner on this project to fulfill a practicum as a graduation requirement. Her work included the coordination of communicating with partners through email to set up the interviews and obtaining all IRB consent forms, conducting the interviews, as well as engaging in the coding process of the transcribed interviews. The help of a graduate student from another campus was intentional so that the

partners had the opportunity to speak with someone not employed within the community engagement office and who they did not have regular communication with. The hope was to encourage transparency with an interviewer with a more objective perspective and who was not directly involved in fulfilling the nonprofit organization's request for student volunteers, interns, and service learners. The goal was to create a neutral space where the partner would feel free to offer honest response and critique of the partnership.

In some cases, individuals preferred to invite one or more additional staff members to participate in the conversations for reasons such as inclusion of agency staff members who have more frequent student interaction. IRB consent forms were shared with all participating partners ahead of time, and the graduate student traveled to the partners' sites to conduct the interviews over a span of three weeks. As the decision to have a graduate student from a different university conduct the interviews was deliberate, so was the choice to interview the participants at their offices. The goal was again to create a space where the partner(s) felt safe sharing critique of the campus practices and policies related community engagement. The interviews each lasted about 45–60 minutes and were recorded and later transcribed.

The principles that were used to create the questions for the interviews were then used to code the interview transcripts based on a variety of themes found in the principles such as reciprocity, humility, student learning, preparedness, impact and more. After coding, five top themes which occurred 50 or more times across conversations with the partners were identified. The top themes were compared to past iterations of similar partnership health assessments (conducted approximately every five years) and for the staff to discuss opportunities for change and improvements. This methodology has been translated into the Community Partner Health Assessment Framework (CPHAF) and is outlined in detail in the discussion section.

RESULTS

This section outlines and defines the five themes that emerged from coding. The discussion section which follows describes in detail the CPHAF approach, including how to employ the selected principles (such as those created by Stanford University) to make meaning of interview data. The top themes were concluded based on the number of times the theme was addressed within interview coding. The top five were: preparation (97), learning and reflection (95), reciprocity (94), accountability (87), and evaluation (50).

Preparation is defined in part as the essential understanding of the "social, ideological, economic,

environmental, and historical contexts of service experiences" (Stanford University, 2019, p. 1). In the context of these community partner conversations, preparation and humility (another of the tenants outlined in the Stanford Principles) often worked together. A significant point of consideration that emerged was that while interviews primarily addressed preparation in terms of existing skills, understanding site norms, and committing to a schedule, for nonprofit partners, there was also reference to the need for students to be prepared to show empathy and have good listening skills in order to be fully engaged. Similarly, the principle of learning and reflection acknowledges that the learning process cycles through "preparation, experience, and reflection" and posits that time and space for introspection as one engages in service is essential to "encourage learning opportunities with community stakeholders" (Stanford University, 2019, p. 1). Community partners often spoke to their own need for growth within the organizations in terms of helping students process their experience.

The next two themes were reciprocity and accountability. Reciprocity ensures that there is value and relevance to all involved in the partnership. Much of the interview commentary that lent to the theme of reciprocity spoke to the high value of the transactional aspects of the partnership alongside some of the more transformational characteristics, such as longevity and adaptability. This led to questions about respecting community partners whose aim is transactional versus transformational in nature. Accountability involves the

understanding of goals as "shared goals" and means "recognizing, negotiating, and taking ownership over outcomes" that sustain trust and respect (Stanford University, 2019, p. 1). Much community partner commentary referred to student commitment and responsibility, which in coding was connected to this principle and theme.

Finally, evaluation is the assessment of the impact of efforts throughout the service experience (Stanford University, 2019, p. 1). Institutions often think of evaluating their impact on partner organizations. Interviews showed partners' appreciation of attention to this impact, but a trend within this theme was that many community partners had an equal interest in knowing students' perspectives on their experiences at the sites.

DISCUSSION

This Discussion section will outline the CPHAF (**Figure 1**) in detail, and the findings of the case study will be utilized as an example of how the framework can be put into practice and lead to program improvement. The CPHAF includes five steps: (1) values discernment and question development, (2) partner selection, (3) interviewing and data management, (4) analysis and recommendations, and (5) change implementation. One of the keys to making the evaluation and subsequent discussion impactful is a commitment to the ongoing examination of the health of the relationships, so it is assumed that
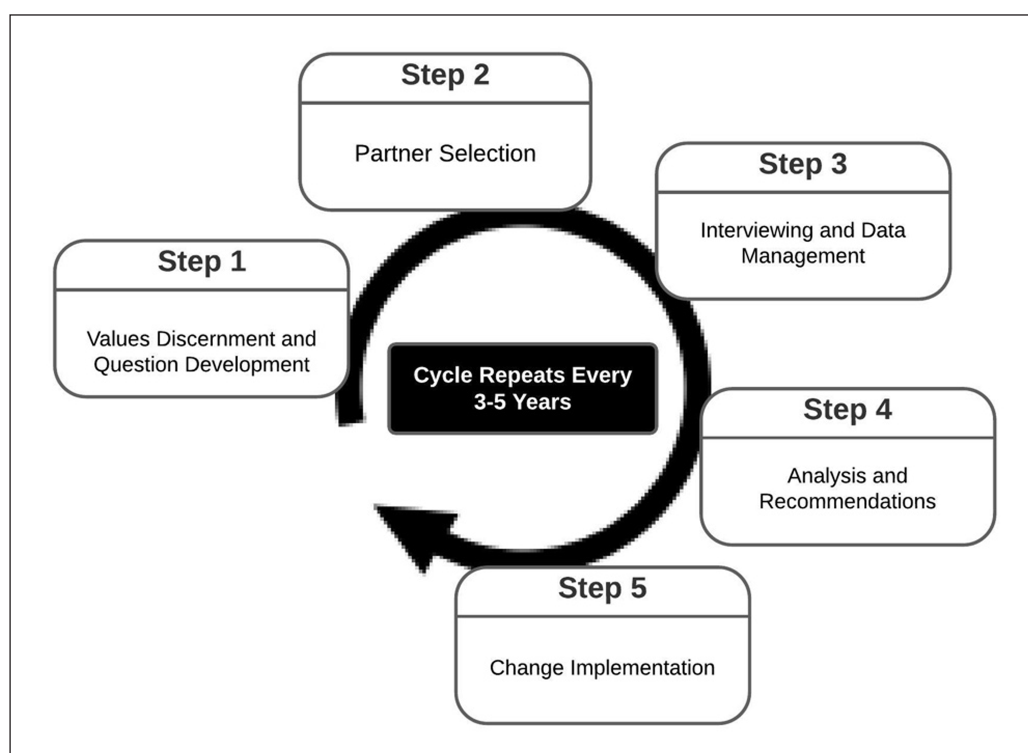
Figure 1 Cycle of the Community Partner Health Assessment Framework.

this process would repeat on regular intervals, such as every five years. "Health" is operationalized as meaning the partnership is beneficial to the organization in meeting its mission and goals while simultaneously providing meaningful experiential learning opportunities for students.

The values discernment and question development step of this process for some campuses will be simple, while for others may prove more laborious. This beginning step asks campuses to clarify their values and aspirations regarding community-based learning, articulating who they want to be, what aspects of community engaged work are most valued, and how they want to be perceived in their community by students and nonprofit partners. It is important at this point to distinguish between principles and values. As defined earlier, principles are beliefs that guide your actions (Merriam-Webster, 2021), while values are things that are "of relative worth, utility or importance" (Merriam-Webster, 2021). According to these definitions, an institution's values will guide the principles they establish that guide how they carry out community-engaged work.

This phase represents a critical example of why a meaningful, ongoing evaluation cycle can outweigh more generalizable research on community partner perceptions for some campuses. The CPHAF model encourages campuses to reflect and articulate their values and aspirations in the context of the region they are located, their current connections and history of community-based learning collaborations, the strategic direction of the campus, and other factors. For example, is the campus in a region where humility is critical to approaching partners or are campus leaders revered as experts? Are your community-based learning placements in constant competition with other nearby campuses, or does the scale tip the other way, where partners regularly need more student placements to meet community needs? Is the campus a small private college with a long history and supported infrastructure aimed at impactful community engagement, or a campus with a more entrepreneurial approach where faculty maintain relationships with external partners on their own? Does a campus lean further into community impact as opposed the pedagogical design of community-based learning experiences? These considerations are important to articulate so that as evaluation is conducted, areas of alignment and misalignment with the values can be easily identified.

The CPHAF encourages those carrying out the evaluation process to not reinvent the wheel. The rebirth of community engagement by universities began over two decades ago within higher education, and since professional organizations and various campuses that have forged the way have provided well written ideas, principles, tenants, values, and position papers that can guide how a campus engages with

partners. Beyond the Stanford University Principles for Ethical and Effective Service, universities can explore other resources and knowledge hubs offered by organizations such as Campus Compact, the Bonner Foundation, and Imagining America where resources are plentiful and well developed. Working within existing offerings removes a major barrier to the program evaluation cycle and is critical to creating questions that will help to determine if your values are reflected and recognizable to partners. The purpose of having articulated tenants, aspirations, expectations, and values in relation to this evaluation process is so that interview questions can be developed based on them. The philosophical positioning of a campus will lead to authoring open-ended questions where the answers will inform whether or not members of the campus community turn these values into action. The right questions developed at this stage can also reveal where the community partner expertise or methods can innovate student learning.

The second phase is partner selection. This stage highlights the value of evaluation that is campus-specific because it allows for flexibility not only in the depth of community engagement at a particular campus, but also for campuses to do broader or more specific evaluation as part of the cycle. In this case partners were selected that have placed numerous students continuously for more than three years. Further it was also decided to include community partners in the CPHAF process that represent a diverse array of issue areas. The students who are serving at these agencies come from various disciplines including environmental sciences, the humanities, social work, the healthcare professions, and the arts. While this broader examination was a deliberate decision, there may be reason to limit the evaluation to one sector of the nonprofit community. Some campuses may choose to focus on organizations from specific issue areas or even the partners from a particular academic discipline versus casting the net broadly for the purposes of building experiential learning opportunities in particular programs.

The third step is interview and data management. If IRB approval is sought, much of this step will be determined by the IRB protocols. In this step interviewers create templates for emails and follow-up call scripts, and recruit partners for interviews. It is recommended that all interviews be conducted in the community partner space and by someone outside of the key collaborators from the campus in order to level power dichotomies during the discussion and for partner convenience. It is important to record the interviews, have a backup recording device, and if it is comfortable, take notes. Another piece of this process related to the IRB is that if interviewees are asked to sign consent forms, they should be sent them in advance and interviewees should also be told if interviews will be voice recorded.

Once the interviews are complete, they should be transcribed. Paid transcription services are affordable, accurate, and quick. This allows for the focus of the work to be on coding and finding themes and "a-ha" discussions. Themes can be developed based on the original values and tenants that were identified, and that the questions aimed to explore. In this particular case study themes emerged that mirrored the values from the Stanford Principles such as preparation, accountability, reciprocity, evaluation, and learning and reflection. In this study the transcription sometimes reinforced what the campus believed to be true about its partnerships, while in other instances there was clear misalignment, or meaningful ideas offered from partners.

Step four is review and recommendations. The gains students make through community-based learning are often seen by partners, but not always by community engagement professionals or faculty. Reading the transcripts, coding them, and sharing the findings with faculty can lead to an increase in the comfort level of sharing the teaching process and lead to embracing the idea of co-educators. Also, when the evaluation process is on a regular cycle (every three to five years), then earlier iterations can reveal changes in the nonprofit sector or university over time that impact the partnership (for example, an increased interest in environmental issues may lend to a greater student commitment to particular service learning projects). The primary task during this phase is to return to the original guiding values that were laid out in step one, consider what added information the campus has because of the process, and what, if anything, the interviews and subsequent themes revealed. Campuses can consider how well students, administrators, and faculty represent themselves throughout the community-based learning process. Also, there are particular things that become known that might suggest adjusting the way the partnership is conducted or if the values held are appropriate in contrast to the community partner perceptions and values.

Finally, step five is change implementation. In this step, community engagement professionals, advisory boards, and engaged faculty can take new knowledge and identify concrete innovations and changes that can be made that will strengthen partnerships, make the campus a better collaborator, and ensure alignment with the initial philosophical values. This is a critical component where community partners are informed of changes that the university undertakes to strengthen the health of the partnership based on the interviews and evaluation conducted through the CPAHF process.

The findings in this case study offer five insights related to the themes of preparation, accountability, reciprocity, evaluation, and learning and reflection. The preparation theme appeared 97 times throughout the interviews, and there were various enlightening ideas that arose. For example, in the case study, questions were included about the community partner perception of how well the campus prepared students for community-based work. The institution believes that preparation is important and has established messaging delivered in the classroom to over a thousand students each semester about how to prepare for service experiences. Through this, expectations are set about professionalism in communication, being timely and dependable, and entering the relationship with humility to recognizing that the agency is offering a valuable experience equal to what the student is giving. While the campus sees these as part of how students are prepared to enter the community, it relies on the site to accept students where they are at in the developmental process and expects the agency to provide the technical training to learn and succeed in their role. This is a clear delineation of roles agreed to early in the relationship where each plays a role in the preparation process.

During the interviews, one partner described how because students came with such a deficiency of knowledge about the experiences of the elderly, the agency changed the way they did orientation and training. Rather than a traditional orientation session in a conference room, they gave students facility tours while having them push the trainer in a wheelchair so that the students could not only learn the technical skills of how to converse with someone while pushing them in a wheelchair, but they could also begin to empathize with elders who are wheelchair bound as they navigate spaces.

> It's just someone who's a little older and someone
> who has certain deficits, and everyone has
> deficits of one kind or another, and it's learning
> to be sensitive and empathetic and patient
> and good listening and all those skills that
> are really important throughout life, I think.
> (Community Partner Interview)

In addition to showing innovation and the value of experiential learning, it was a reminder that campuses should more freely loosen their grip on their identity as teacher and expert and share this role with practitioners. In this example, one can see congruency with what the campus sees as its role in terms of preparation, and how the agency sees its role as well. The partner provided a distinct perspective on the role of onboarding and preparing students for their community experiences. This example reinforced the roles each stakeholder plays in preparing students, which is laid out as the partnership is first established, which is to say that in this regard the methods currently used to set these boundaries continue to work well.

The second most referenced theme was reciprocity. More than one partner interview led to discussions about the positive benefits of the transactional relationship between the campus community-based learning goals and the partner need for students to help increase the

agency capacity. While transformational relationships are a goal, partners often describe significant value in project-based and simple placement-based exchanges. Sweatman and Warner (2020) describe transactional relationships for CUPs as "…project-based [which] often require[s] limited commitment and minimal disruption to the community partner, whereas transformational relationships are long-term and open to change" (p. 267). One partner offered,

> We often say volunteers are our backbone because if it were not for the volunteers, we wouldn't be able to do what we do on a daily basis. So the college plays a big part because even though they are coming for their service hours, they come and they help us with the meal preparation, set up, serving, and clean up at the end. They play a big part in our programs and we actual look forward to them being here during the school year. (Community Partner Interview)

In this example the partner speaks positively about the transactional nature of "service hours" in exchange for help in meeting their clients' needs at the meal program. There is a tendency within the community engagement field to value transformational relationships more; however in some of the interviews it was clear how the transactional nature of the partnership benefited partner agencies.

A third finding based on the themes that appeared in the transcript of the interviews was accountability. Partners relayed how important student accountability is for success, and how they depend on students to follow through. When a long-term partner begins to feel like students are not dependable and accountable, they begin to question the partnership's value to the agency. One partner offered that when students express being overwhelmed by school, or not having time to complete service learning hours, they can try and be understanding, but ultimately, they need the student to show up. In response to students explaining they did not have enough time, the partner offered this sentiment.

> …I can't fix that. I can empathize with it, but I can't fix it. Also, be responsible, tell us if you can't make it. And tell us as soon as you know you can't make it, and don't just not show up. That's just really bad because sometimes we're waiting for just one person. (Community Partner Interview)

This can be critical to the future of a partnership; it is one of the hardest realities of this work. One student's actions can have a detrimental effect on the health of a long-term partnership. Conversely, most nonprofit professionals show incredible grace and understanding with students and can see the overarching benefit beyond one or two undependable students, as long as they feel like the

campus is willing to hold the students accountable or adjust the types of students they assign to their site (for example, senior versus freshman students).

Another revelation from the interviews came from a reoccurring theme expressed by community partners related to evaluation. The campus understood evaluation to mean how well the university was assessing the impact of efforts through the service experience. It was clear that several sites were more interested in what the university evaluation revealed about the student satisfaction of the experience. One partner articulated this well.

> I am kind of curious what the students are saying about the experience; I would really like to know… Some students follow up and say, 'Hey, I really like it'… but not very often and I don't anticipate that usually, but I am curious what they have to say about the organization when they are going back. Because if the organization is being represented with some areas to improve, that would be interesting to me, right?

This brought up questions of ownership of evaluation, meaning whose responsibility is it to ask the students questions about satisfaction with the agency and placement? Was it the organization's responsibility or the university's, or both? In this iteration of this evaluation process, the idea of ownership of partner evaluation was first revealed as a potential area of improvement that the campus had not considered. In contrast to the role delineation described early in terms of preparing students for the service experience, evaluation was an area where partners offered room for change which caused the campus to ponder this question related to where the responsibility lies when it comes to collecting the student perception of the agency. Is it a university's role to build, administer, and share the results of such an evaluation or does the responsibility lie with the agency? This is an idea currently being considered as a potential change in practice based on the interviews done.

The final area where the data brought new insight for the campus was related to learning and reflection. These findings were more complex. Partners expressed an uncertainty between what the students were supposed to learn from the experience and what their role was, and what growth was actually occurring. While some partners understood the general learning goals of the courses through the syllabi that was shared with them, some did not know if those goals were realized, what the expectation was related to their part in it, etc. Partners expressed a desire to know the faculty better, have a better understanding of their role as co-educators, and know the results (for example, if the students learned what they intended). One partner summarized this by articulating a concern.

My concern is that once we have them feeling like crap, are we giving them a context and a framework to understand that bad feeling? Because otherwise they are just going to leave and feel bad, and they are going to be like, "Wow, that really sucks," or worse, it's going to entrench certain biases, stereotypes, and prejudices that they may have come in with already. So, I think we as an organization are still putting a lot of thought into how do we improve the orientation and reflection? (Community Partner Interview)

There is a lot to unpack in this theme: lack of faculty connection, lack of follow-up, and a recognition that the partners are seeing student growth but are not part of the grading or evaluation process, and they are interested in at least hearing from the campus about how the students did in relation to the learning goals. As another area where the evaluation process is inspiring change, this theme is helping the campus to consider and invest in how community partners are trained as co-educators. Specifically, community partners expressed a desire to be more knowledgeable in current methods of formative reflective practice. Similarly, the campus is reconsidering how faculty might be better integrated and educated on the neighborhoods and agencies where students are engaging in service activities. This second piece has led to the development of a neighborhood storytelling training where community leaders are paid stipends to share their experiences as faculty visit local nonprofits, cooperatives, and community gardens where students serve in order to give them a better understanding of the student experience.

Conducting the Community Partnership Health Assessment Framework led to a series of "a-ha" moments and recommendations for tangible change based on community partner feedback. The changes being considered include building a feedback tool for students to share their perceptions of the agency and the experience directly with the non-profit staff. Similarly, ways are being explored that will allow the community engagement office to more regularly share reflection journal entries, grade data, and more information related to student learning and outcomes connected to the particular service learning courses. Other changes including training community partner in methods of formative, conversational reflection practices with students and providing opportunities for faculty to be better connected to the student experience through storytelling and bus tours with stops at service sites where local community experts are paid for sharing their stories of their work and the agencies. These potential changes grow directly out of "a-ha" moments and the themes during partner interviews from the CPHAF process, based on the fact that the campus places high value on student learning in community settings.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Formalizing the CPHAF framework and considering its utility during the case study process revealed opportunities for future research. First, this project had us wondering out loud about ownership of aspects of partnerships and how they are perceived, shared, and delineated over time. For example, the realization that community partners were interested in the student evaluation of their experience and of the agency could lead to change on what information is collected from student evaluations and how it is shared. Building such a tool could be a collaborative project with interested partners that will allow them to include data points of interest to the non-profit community. Another area of future research may be an examination of the barriers to faculty integration in the community-based learning in an effort to find best practices in relationship building between faculty and non-profit partners where their students serve.

CONCLUSION

The Community Partnership Health Assessment Framework (CPHAF) is a tool campus and community engagement offices can use to periodically to do a deeper dive into the relationship between their institution and nonprofit stakeholders. These relationships are largely maintained by the students who engage in the community-based learning placements at the sites, which can be an arms-length distance from campus leaders. Stepping into the partner organization space to listen to their perspective, critique, and innovative ideas is a valuable step in having a transformational relationship, even when the individual projects and placements can be transactional in nature. The CPHAF presented is displayed in a case study example, which includes limitations related to generalizability; however, as a systematic approach to evaluating, it is likely more valuable to institutions in relation to their community-based learning programs due to regional and cultural differences. In the example presented, the health of the partnerships is perceived as valuable to the agency as they work to fulfill their mission, and agencies acknowledged the university's role. Despite this, there were a number of valuable insights and ideas that emerged from the interviews. For example, a number of community partner interviews revealed that the delineation of duties related to student preparation was clear; however, the ownership over evaluating the student experience and the role of community partners as co-educators was unclear. As campuses grow their community-based learning profiles and footprint in non-profit, government, and corporate sectors lessons learned through evaluation are crucial. Effective systems, clear role delineation, and a shared collaborative spirit around service, organizational mission, and deep student

learning can lead to long-term partnerships benefiting community partners, students, and ultimately the larger client base served by agencies.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

Hannah Lubar 🔟 *orcid.org/0000-0002-5848-0110*
Marquette University, US

Laurie Marks 🔟 *orcid.org/0000-0001-8233-3172*
UW-Milwaukee, US

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