

BRIDGING ‘TOWN & GOWN’ THROUGH INNOVATIVE UNIVERSITY- COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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Why Are Innovative University-Community Partnerships Important?

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ABSTRACT

Historically, universities and their surrounding communities have failed to work cooperatively to address common problems. Fortunately, this state of affairs has begun to change, due at least in part to a shift from the old *government* paradigm to the new *governance* paradigm. The governance paradigm encourages the creation of innovative partnerships between the government sector, the private sector and the non-profit sector in order to harness the collective energies and strengths of all partners. This article begins by providing some definition clarification as to what is meant by innovative university-community partnerships. A brief history of university-community relations is then provided. The shift from a government to a governance perspective and how this shift is promoting the use of innovative university-community partnerships is then discussed. Next, several case examples of successful innovative university-community partnerships are presented. Finally, seven critical success factors are identified that the authors believe lead to successful innovative university-community partnerships.

Key Words: partnerships, university-community partnerships, evaluation of universities-community, partnerships, key factors in successful university-community partnerships.

“No single actor, public or private, has the all-encompassing knowledge, overview, information or resources to solve complex and diversified problems.”

The Copenhagen Center

Innovation has been defined as a: new approach or technology that positively alters the operation of a service, program or administration process (Reviere *et al.*, 1996). Another definition offered by Glor (1996) stresses the importance of calculated risk-taking in achieving the goal of improvement and reformation. In similar fashion, Zhuang (1995) emphasizes key words such as uniqueness, improving processes, and dissemination. While the ‘newness’ component of these definitions remains elusive and relative (new to whom?), other aspects of innovation such as creativity, organizational improvement, and knowledge building remain integral to the concept. Innovative university-community partnering is the topic of this article.

Historically, partnerships between universities and community organizations have been either non-existent or unconstructive; this state of affairs being the result of opposing philosophies and practices. This alienation has resulted in characterizations of the ‘impractical and plodding’ academic and the ‘sloppy and impulsive’ practitioner. Despite such a turbulent history, the last ten years has witnessed a renaissance in the creation of innovative university-community partnerships. This renaissance is due at least in part to a shift from the *government* paradigm to the new *governance* paradigm.

The governance paradigm (e.g., Daly, 2003; Newland 2002; Salamon, 2002) stresses the importance of synergistic partnerships that harness the strengths of each partner. It is based on the

assumption that social issues can only be addressed through the collective and innovative efforts of multiple stakeholders including government, business and the non-profit sector. The governance paradigm seeks to create win-win partnerships, whereby complex social issues and problems are addressed, but where each of the partners also benefits from the exchange. Faced with increasingly messy and complex social problems, universities and communities are creating innovative collaborations at an exponential rate. Although the popularity of these partnerships continues to increase, certain questions remain unanswered. Do these innovative university-community partnerships really work? And, what factors contribute to successful innovative university-community partnerships?

This article attempts to shed some light on the above questions by first reexamining the traditional disconnect between universities and communities and the need for innovative partnerships to bridge the gap. Several case examples of innovative university-community partnerships are then presented. Building upon the case studies and other relevant literature, seven factors considered essential to successful innovative university-community partnerships are then identified and discussed.

University and Community: A Tale of Two Cultures

In 1876, Daniel C. Gilman, the first president of John Hopkins University - - arguably America's first modern research university - - expressed the hope that American universities would one day, "make for less misery among the poor, less ignorance in the schools, less bigotry in the temple, less suffering in the hospital, less fraud in business and less folly in politics" (cited in Harkavy, 1998:4). Despite Gilman's clarion call for engagement, American universities have historically had a mixed record when it comes to involvement with their surrounding communities (Carr, 2002).

In the United States, hostility towards universities was initially born out of geographical isolation. Universities were often located in rural (frequently remote) areas far removed from the economic and social problems of the broader society. Universities promoted themselves as elite bastions of information and knowledge. Professors and students attired in their academic gowns were as distinct from townfolk as university campuses were from their surrounding architectures. This separation is captured in the often invoked expression: 'town and gown.' Despite their isolated beginnings, universities were soon threatened by the expansion of urban areas. Many universities were simply swallowed up by their surrounding communities, becoming urban campuses not by design but by circumstance. The response of many universities to encroaching urbanization was to build higher walls and stronger gates in an attempt to maintain a separation from their surrounding communities. The time period between 1914 and the late 1980's is best described as the "Ivory Tower" period of American higher education. During this time, academic efforts were directed primarily towards research and publication (Maurana *et. al.*, 2000). As Harkavy (1998) states, "in the decades after World Wars I and II, American higher education increasingly competed, ferociously, egocentrically, narcissistically, for institutional prestige and material resources. Almost single-mindedly, pursuing their self-centered goals, they increasingly concentrated on essentially scholastic, inside-the-academy problems and conflicts rather than on the very hard, very complex problems involved in helping American society realize the democratic promise of American life for all Americans" (p. 9).

In the end, higher walls and stronger gates did not work. The economic and social problems of the broader society continued to infiltrate university campuses. Not surprisingly, the relationships between universities and communities declined even further. Writing during the mid-1980s, Kysiak (1986) described the status of university- community relations at Yale University and Northwestern University. Kysiak commented that “although universities bring great prestige to a community, many citizens perceive them solely as large, powerful, non-taxpaying entities that soak up city services and provide little in return. This perception, combined with the universities’ penchant for making unilateral decisions without city consultation, made the relationship between the two entities more and more acerbic as time went on” (p. 50).

It would be erroneous to suggest that all historical relationships between universities and communities were hostile and unproductive. The *Land Grant College Act* (1862) facilitated the development of agricultural and mechanical technologies (Maurana et. al., 2000). In 1889, the University of Chicago opened ‘Hull House’, a university-community partnership designed to help mitigate the effects of industrialization and urbanization on the low-income population of Chicago’s West Side. At Columbia University, President Seth Low encouraged faculty and students to become involved in community work (Harkavy, 1998). Unfortunately these examples represent exceptions to the rule; rare spikes in innovative university-community relations on an otherwise backboard of stagnancy. Surges in university-community partnerships did take place from time-to- time, like for example the efforts of the U. S. Office of Scientific Research and Development (USOSRD). However, the efforts of the USOSRD were in response to the US-USSR ‘Cold War’ and were lopsided as they emphasized military endeavors while largely ignoring social partnering.

The Need for Innovative Partnerships and the Emergency of Governance

Based on their failed experiences, university and community leaders began to speculate that viable long term strategies may require innovative collaborations. Pragmatically, universities began to appreciate that in order to grow and prosper, their futures were inextricably linked with those of their surrounding communities (and vice versa). This need for change was facilitated by a paradigm shift towards the new ‘governance.’ Although governance represents an innovation in its own right, for purposes of this discussion it is treated as an indication of the changing relationships between the government, business and the non-profit sectors. Although American universities represent a mix of both public and private institutions, the new governance perspective is affecting both and helping to foster and promote all kinds of partnerships, collaborations, alliances and other forms of cooperative interaction between these previously autonomous organizations.

‘Governance’ is a broad term that revolves around public problem solving. As a term, governance reveals the essential function of government and its relationships with private sector organizations, stakeholders, other countries, levels of governments, and the public. This reflection encompasses the decision-making, interconnectedness and interdependence of all policymaking and service delivery. This approach involves integrating stakeholders and communities to resolve problems; it recognizes and embraces a global perspective; and ultimately, it recognizes that new ‘tools’ (e.g., contracts, grants, vouchers, PPPs) are required for achieving success in addressing social problems. In short, the concept of governance is grounded in a collective action approach to

public problem resolution. Governance proponents (e.g., Salamon, 2002), argue that governance is a natural progression that has occurred within government due in large part to a need to placate issues of a public nature. Other supporters (e.g., Reddel, 2002) argue that “multi- sector institutional arrangements” are indicative of trends toward innovation in public sector services.

The move towards governance has resulted in increased attention being paid to how innovative university-community partnerships are formed, how they operate, and what they accomplish (Rubin, 2000). Concurrently, innovative university-community partnerships - - involving both public and private institutions of higher learning - - have received financial support from organizations like the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through its Office of University Partnerships (OUP). The goals of OUP include increasing university involvement in local revitalization projects, the creation of ‘urban scholars,’ and the meshing of various teaching, research and service partnerships into a cohesive force (OUP, 1999). In 2003, OUP received \$6.8 million dollars in funding from HUD for its Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) program. *If* one views the creation of the OUP as a harbinger of things to come, *then* it appears the future of university-community partnerships is rosy.

Case Examples of Successful Innovative University- Community Partnerships

Writing about the current status of research in the field of university-community partnerships, Rubin (2000) notes three contemporary trends: the literature has transitioned from simple case studies to more systematic, longitudinal and comparative studies; the literature is now being largely produced by academics rather than practitioners, and a wide array of academic perspectives is being brought to bear on the subject (e. g., sociology, psychology, social work, education, anthropology, education, political science, public administration and others). Because of the increased attention being paid to the subject, it is now possible to formulate an initial taxonomy of university-community partnerships with the goal of identifying efficacious policies and programs that are based on innovation. Building upon the research of both academics and practitioners, the Office of Community Partnerships (OUP, 1999) within the U. S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development has developed a taxonomy of university-community partnerships or more broadly university-community relationships. The taxonomy contains seven categories: (1) service learning, (2) service provision, (3) faculty involvement, (4) student volunteerism, (5) community in the classroom, (6) applied research, and (7) major institutional change. The following case examples illustrate the innovative aspects of each.

Service Learning

Service learning involves university initiatives designed to engage students in community learning and service activities as part of their regular coursework. An example of service learning is provided by Northwestern University.

An undergraduate architecture class at Northeastern University participated in a service learning project focused on the Forest Hills section of Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood. Teams of students studied neighborhood demographics and finance to develop visions of mixed-use centers. Students became educated on the needs of the community, emphasizing the larger

problem of affordable housing. Student models were created with the goals of creating sustainable, demographically inclusive and balanced communities. During the project, students learned about collaborating with others on a common theme. Student teams produced three sets of models, each emphasizing areas of importance identified by community members: privacy for families, retail activity, considerations for older adults, and open-park space. The students were not paid for their work, only rewarded with grades, and there was no profit to the university; this approach helped to build trust with the community (Adams, 2003).

Service Provision

Service provision involves faculty and student initiatives that take the form of coordinated, sustained, long-term projects targeted towards a specific community. An example of service provision is provided by the University of Pennsylvania.

The University of Pennsylvania launched a series of service provision initiatives as part of a large-scale effort to revitalize the neighborhoods surrounding its West Philadelphia campus. The University is investing in local housing restoration, area retail development projects, lighting installation for 1,200 West Philadelphia properties, and an incentive plan to entice faculty and staff to take up residence in the communities. The University of Pennsylvania has also created working relationships with community-based organizations to acquire and use information technology for neighborhood development purposes. A Center for Community Technology in West Philadelphia was opened and staffed by graduate students and AmeriCorps volunteers. The center refurbishes and recycles used computers, offers technology-training classes and operates a community information portal (OUP, 1999).

Faculty Involvement

Faculty involvement takes the form of individual initiatives where faculty becomes the driving force behind particular community activities. An example of faculty involvement is provided by the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

UCLA conducted a local and regional effort to build local community capacity from data. This initiative targeted tax, property and disability-related data. UCLA also provided the necessary training and consulting services for community groups to mobilize data as a tool for land reclamation and housing development. These faculty involvement initiatives are handled administratively through UCLA's Advanced Policy Institute (API). Faculty and staff from the institute advise local government officials on strategic planning issues related to: housing, economic development, transportation and the environment. Technical assistance is also provided to community-based organizations. Through a web site called "Neighbor-hood Knowledge Los Angeles," community groups can access the latest data by: individual property, census tract, zip code, or council district and display that information on maps (Roper & Pinkett, 2002).

Student Volunteerism

Student volunteerism involves individual and voluntary initiatives where students engage in community activities separate and apart from service learning initiatives. An example of student volunteerism is provided by the College of William and Mary.

The College of William and Mary's Office of Student Volunteer Services created *College*

Partnership for Kids, a tutoring program run by more than 100 student volunteers each semester. College students provide one-on-one and small group sessions in a variety of subjects to hundreds of children from 11 elementary and middle schools in the Williamsburg-James City/County school system. In addition to providing tutoring services, the college students serve as role models and help build children's self-esteem, which has proven to impact positively on academic achievement. College students help identify children who are academically needy, provide tutoring space, and address children's special needs. William and Mary staff provides supervision to tutors at each school, tutor training, and coordination of transportation for volunteers (OUP, 1999).

'Community in the Classroom'

'Community in the classroom' initiatives involve the design of university courses that enhance community building and community capacity. An example of community in the classroom is provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In an effort to help rebuild and empower its community, MIT developed a Neighborhood Technology Center program. The program, called "Creating Community Connections" (C3), provides residents of all ages in Boston's Roxbury/South End with access to computer training to improve community safety, recreation, continuing education, and employment opportunities. Initiated by MIT graduate students, the project utilized computers, Internet access, comprehensive training courses and a web-based system. As part of this project, MIT worked with residents of the community to collect information and build a database that detailed community resources. Once residents received computer training at the Neighborhood Technology Center and were deemed "computer literate," a computer with Internet access was installed in their home. This project was to serve as a model, demonstrating the use of information and technology to support interests, needs and improve the quality of life by increasing access to services and awareness of community resources (Roper & Pinkett, 2002).

Applied Research

Applied research initiatives involve the university, faculty and students in data collection, analysis, and reporting on community issues of the day. An example of applied research is provided by the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Central Florida.

In 2003, the UCF Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) was contracted by Orange County Government (Orlando, Florida) to complete a review of its newly created Central Receiving Center (CRC) for adults with mental illness and substance abuse issues. The CRC is a partnership as well, collaborating with area providers including: local governments, law enforcement agencies, community organizations, area hospitals, and the public defender. The UCF Center conducted a review of the CRC's first six months of operation. The review included: site visits, interviews, data collection and analysis, and a final report to the CRC Governing Board. The review also provided Orange County Government and the CRC Governing Board with a capacity and equity analysis that indicated Orange County was not receiving its fair share of state and local funding to serve the identified target population. Orange County Government has asked the CCP to conduct a follow-on study to identify best practices in community mental health system delivery and to identify gaps in service in Orange County (Martin *et. al.*, 2003).

Major Institutional Change

Major institutional change initiatives are designed to bring about internal organizational cultural change (e. g., changes in mission, promotion and tenure criteria, awards, course offerings, etc.) in universities in order to promote more university-community engagement. An example of major institutional change is provided by Howard University.

In an effort to overcome its image of isolation, Howard University's president established the Center for Urban Progress (CUP) in 1995 and the Howard University Community Association (HUCA) in 1996. Howard University, utilizing CUP and HUCA, plays a major role in Northwest Washington, DC's social and economic development. CUP is run by faculty, staff and students. Its mission is "to mobilize the Howard University community to address urban crises – locally, nationally, and globally – through the development of academic programs and community leadership training, applied research activities, technical assistance, and direct project implementation" (Roper & Pinkett, 2002, p. 43). HUCA serves as liaison between area residents and the university. HUCA's programs include organizing student volunteerism, supporting community design and planning activities, and serving as a clearinghouse for information. CUP and HUCA collaborate on projects; recently incorporating information and technology, and have opened a Community Technology Center (CTC) providing training and support services to area community-based organizations (Roper & Pinkett, 2002).

While university-community partnerships, such as the ones identified above, continue to increase in quantity, one finds a paucity of research concerning their quality. University-community partnerships may represent innovation when examined in toto, but what elements of partnerships exhibit creativity, build knowledge and improve the partnership? Here we need to examine the critical factors that appear to generate innovative programs/policies. This discussion will be followed by specific case studies.

Critical Success Factors in Innovative University - Community Partnerships

Building upon the case examples discussed in this article, as well as a distillation of the other relevant literature cited in the paper (e. g., Dugery, & Knowles, 2003; Blackwell *et al.*, 2003; OUP, 2003; Roper & Pinkett, 2002; Sandmann & Baker-Clark, 1997), several factors critical to successful innovative university-community partnerships can be identified. These critical success factors include: (1) *funding*, (2) *communication*, (3) *synergy*, (4) *measurable outcomes*, (5) *visibility and dissemination of findings*, (6) *organizational compatibility* and (7) *simplicity*. Innovation may be viewed as the necessary tool in each factor.

Funding

The source of funding as well as the nature of the financial relationship is considered to be central to a successful university-community partnership. Blackwell *et al.*, (2003) suggests that government agencies (and to a lesser extent foundations) are usually willing to provide funding for university-community partnerships that focus on "community driven research." However, the role funders are to play during implementation needs to be defined early and clearly (Blackwell *et al.*, 2003). A funder may desire to be either an active or passive participant in a university-community partnership.

Communication

Sandmann and Baker-Clark (1997) highlight the importance of initial meetings between universities and community partners. Frequent, formal meetings are encouraged to identify problems and challenges, discuss expectations, and develop professional relationships. The effectiveness of these meetings is said to be reflected by the presence of the following characteristics: (1) assignment of objectives, (2) effectiveness of communication, (3) clarity of decision-making, (4) clarity of accountabilities, (5) right skills in the right place, (6) credible partnering behavior of leaders, and (7) responsive ways of working (The Partnership Index, 2004).

A large-scale example is provided by the university-community partnership efforts of the Wright State University School of Medicine (Mace *et. al.*, 2002). This university- community partnership includes three health departments, thirteen counties, seven hospitals and eighteen academic departments. Within this organizational complexity, initial meetings enabled stakeholders to define a shared mission and clarify goals. Mace *et. al.*, (2002) describe these meetings as such: “in the first few months there were many more questions than answers. This open-discussion and exchange of ideas served the team as an effective way to communicate each individual’s perspectives and ultimately resulted in the successful articulation of a comprehensive mission statement” (p. 58). Logistically, such communication requires not only advanced planning but innovative strategies such as television and/or audio conference calls.

A smaller-scale example is provided by the university-community partnership efforts of the University of Southern California (UCLA) and its “UCLA Mobile Clinic Project.” The Mobile Clinic is an undertaking of the UCLA Center for Experiential Education (O’Byrne *et al.*, 2002). The Mobile Clinic provides food and health services to approximately 200 homeless individuals in West Hollywood, and relies on student volunteers from various disciplines for support. The importance of communication in partnerships is underscored by the innovative development of a steering committee of 30 students who define the program’s objectives and to integrate differing perspectives. Sandmann and Baker-Clark (1997) add that interactions between stakeholders may become more informal once a pragmatic framework has been implemented, though maintenance of the stakeholder roles and responsibilities should continually be addressed.

Synergy

Successful university-community partnerships also acknowledge and incorporate the participatory efforts of the various stakeholders; a notion termed “partnership synergy” (Lasker *et. al.*, 2001). University-community partnerships require a two-way street approach to knowledge development and transference. University-community partnerships that attempt to adopt a rigid uni-directional (university to community) style are said to have less chance of being successful. Faculty involved in university- community partnerships must treat practitioners as full partners, not junior partners (Wettenhall, 2003; Bolton & Stolcis, 2003). Theoretically the interaction of multiple actors is thought to stimulate more significant change than individuals acting separately on the same problem. This is analogous to Lester Salamon’s (2002) description of “governance” relations whereby multiple stakeholders and network relationships are viewed as an innovative and more efficacious option than traditional “government” models.

Measurable Outcomes

In order to be considered successful, university-community partnerships need specific measures of results. Therefore, early in the development of a university-community partnership, members should be encouraged to construct measurable objectives. Due to the complexity often found in university-community partnerships, traditional approaches to evaluation and outcome assessment may be “ill suited” (Blackwell *et. al.*, 2003). Nevertheless, some form of impact evaluation is necessary and communication between stakeholders should be designed to reach consensus on outcome measurements. After 40 years of designing complex and rigorous program evaluations, sociologist Peter Rossi affirmed that defining the purpose of a program through measurable outcomes to be the most difficult aspect of the work (see Rossi *et. al.*, 1999). Here, university-community partnerships can become either a quagmire of thoughts based on power relations or the clearly more desirable option of an innovative partnership that amalgamates both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Visibility and Dissemination of Knowledge

Another crucial aspect of successful university-community partnerships is visibility and the dissemination of the research and knowledge generated. Partnerships do not exist in a vacuum; therefore it is important that knowledge is disseminated to a wider audience. Collected data must be analyzed and results presented in a professional manner. To promote the visibility of university-community partnerships, multiple communications strategies are frequently required. Academics may publish articles in journals, while practitioners may issue press releases and use word of mouth at annual meetings (Blackwell *et. al.*, 2003). While Microsoft PowerPoint remains the tool of choice for both academics and practitioners, in recent years there has been an emergence of alternative tools like geographic information systems (GIS). GIS utilizes polygons, lines and points to create geographic maps that contain both the findings and implications of the university-community partnership. Additionally, maps can be displayed on-line and altered to reflect real-time changes in the environment under consideration. This represents a powerful and innovative tool for partnerships.

Geographic maps received increased attention after Commissioner William Bratton of the New York Police developed an innovative approach to reducing crime called Compstat. Beginning in 1994, Bratton initiated fortnightly meetings with police chiefs in which crime statistics were exhibited graphically. “Hot spots” of crime were identified and police resources targeted efficiently in conjunction with community groups. Some have claimed that Compstat was primarily responsible for the large reductions in crime that occurred during that last 15 years in New York, although this contention has been challenged (see Silverman, 2001). What has not been challenged is the efficacy of using visual maps in order to display and disseminate knowledge on complex social problems. Bulky and outdated reports were disbanded in favor of a system that facilitated evidence based leadership and accountability.

Technology

Three articles in the *Innovation Journal* recently explored the relationship between technological innovation and education (see Stevens & Dibbon, 2003; Lynch & Lynch, 2003; Jebeile & Reeve, 2003). Although focusing on primary-level and secondary-level education, the tools of bulletin boards, real time discussion, web casts, and video files all exhibit potential for future partnership projects. Just as these tools enable learning in a convenient environment, they

can make university-community partnerships more efficient by enabling 24 hour communication and reducing transit times. Technology also plays a significant role in broadcasting the purpose and outcomes of successful university-community partnerships. Websites can provide a clear illustration of the various stakeholders within the partnership, can feature recent programs, and can include contact information for funders. Partnerships that have been successful and that have enjoyed longevity are usually quick to embrace the benefits of technology.

Another consideration for innovative university-community partnerships is the spatial location of the technology. Rosan (2002) highlights the economic benefits various agencies can receive by simply being located near a technologically saturated region, also known as “research park” areas. For example, in 1996 the Stanford Research Park had an estimated gross domestic product of \$100 million, with over half of the companies in the research park founded by Stanford graduates (Rosan, 2002). Private organizations have a vested interest in improving the local community, and partnerships provide the opportunity for local organizations to increase their level of technological competency and ultimately increase funding opportunities. Successful partnerships often include technology as an innovative tool into a symbiotic relationship with the components of the broader community.

Organizational Compatibility

Successful partnerships tend to involve organizations that function in a fairly similar manner. This tenet can jeopardize partnerships where the academic environment is operating in a fashion that does not relate well to the off-campus environment. Organizational conflict in university-community partnerships frequently manifests itself in practitioners perceiving academics as ‘slow, aloof and impractical’, while academics perceive university-community partnerships as ‘community service requirements’ devoid of scientific rigor

Sandmann and Baker-Clark (1997) suggest that compatibility can be improved by all stakeholders sharing the “status of expert,” here the various participants in the university-community partnership can be pacified into achieving their goals. Bolton and Stolcis (2003) as well as Buckley (1998) suggest that academics need to be able to compromise when it comes to such issues as: theory versus pragmatism, data-supported versus logical reasoning, scientific method versus case study, and academic versus practitioner dissemination of knowledge. These suggestions for enhancing compatibility certainly fall under a governance model where power and decision making are shared.

Simplicity

University-community partnerships often grossly underestimate the investment of time, and money required as well as the level of skills necessary for success. Additionally, partners often enter into collaborations without being adequately prepared and then become overwhelmed by the complexity of the tasks involved. A 1995 study of academics involved in university-community partnerships found that most had seriously misjudged the complexity of their projects (Sandman and Waldschmidt, 1996).

While stakeholders often come together with the hope of enacting social change there is a danger of this enthusiasm leading to projects that are ambiguous and unobtainable. Successful partnerships tend to be founded on simple modes of operation. ‘Simple’ in this context refers to

explicit goals, common definitions, and achievable outcomes. Schensul (1999) examined university-community partnerships designed to combat AIDS and discovered a lack of simplicity. Schensul recommends that such partnerships be grounded on a simple AIDS intervention model. This model should be restricted to one of the following research designs: formative research, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, theory building, or policy development. Although these categories are not mutually exclusive the goal is to promote feasibility in partnerships.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, what can be said about innovative university-community partnerships? Certainly, a few observations can be made:

First, and most importantly, innovative university-community partnerships are alive and well and flourishing on the campuses of many universities. These partnerships are indicative of the need for collaboration. Social problems are simply beyond the range of single organizations; rather synergistic efforts are required to increase the potential impact of policies.

Second, while increased academic attention is being paid to the area of university-community partnerships, the research is still embryonic in nature and (despite statements to the contrary in the literature) still primarily of a case study nature. Fortunately, this research has been guided by the governance paradigm shift in public administration. The governance model provides a theoretical justification for the use of multiple stakeholders, networking and collaboration. The theory can also be empirically tested, particularly in areas of efficiency, efficacy and equity.

Third, the concept of innovation is both essential and implied in any description of university-community partnerships. These partnerships by their very description require stakeholders to produce innovative programs and policies through synergistic relationships. Innovation in university-community partnerships occurs primarily through funding, communication, synergy, measurable outcomes, visibility and dissemination of knowledge, and technology.

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