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RESEARCH ARTICLE (PEER REVIEWED)

The Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement: An Oral History of Its Foundations, Achievements, Challenges and Future Aspirations

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Abstract

For two decades, the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement has been widely seen as a prestigious indicator of rigorous, significant and ongoing institutional commitment to embed community engagement within teaching and learning, research and outreach. This is the case for many colleges and universities in the USA and in other countries. At the same time, community engagement as a core institutional feature is under considerable pressure, with the extent of its authentic and sustainable institutionalisation debated. This article offers an oral history of the founding, development and evolution of the CE Classification for Community Engagement according to six individuals who have been deeply involved since its beginning in the USA. Their reflections shed light on its context, processes, aspirations and achievements, highlighting both what has been achieved and what remains ongoing. These lively, rich contributions are not merely an archive of a time past. Rather, they invite critical reflection and ongoing affirmation of the commitment to mutually beneficial, reciprocal and change-oriented partnerships.

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Keywords

Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement; Community – University Engagement; Oral History; Founding Leadership

Introduction

For two decades, the Carnegie Elective (CE) Classification for Community Engagement has been the North Star for US colleges and universities that intend to strengthen and embed their commitment to reciprocal, accountable and mutually beneficial partnerships across research, teaching and learning and outreach. The CE Classification for Community Engagement is now widely seen as a prestigious indicator of rigorous, significant and ongoing institutional commitment to community engagement, not only within the USA but in other countries around the world. As the elective classification's importance for the field has grown, so too has the need for critical analysis, reflection and discussion. Previous scholarship has explored the elective's development, intentions and the application process (Driscoll 2008, 2009; Saltmarsh & Johnson 2018). Other research has examined evaluation and assessment, and the benefit and impact for classified institutions (Furco & Miller 2009; Sandmann et al. 2009).

This article distinctively contributes to this knowledge base by offering an oral history of the CE Classification for Community Engagement according to six individuals who have been deeply involved since the beginning. The interviewees – all founders – are Amy Driscoll, Tom Ehrlich, Matthew Hartley, Eugene Rice, John Saltmarsh and Lorilee Sandmann. Their words form the bulk of this article. Oral history is a relatively under-utilised approach within community–university engagement. After reading the interview transcripts, we were left to wonder why. Oral historian Michael Frisch (1990, p. xvi) argues that oral history case studies are 'arguably the best way to permit readers to explore what is found there – to sense how issues have come to the surface through engagements with particular problems in particular settings at particular points in a broader, surrounding cultural and political discourse'. While this is not a case study, we strongly agree with Frisch's assessment of the unique value of oral histories. Individually and together, the interviewees' recollections and reflections provide a rich, detailed and comprehensive account of the CE Classification for Community Engagement, from conceptualisation and design to pilot, establishment and expansion. What shines through the detail, however, is the ongoing relevance and significance of these reflections and issues that 'come to the surface'. Interviewees repeatedly situate the CE Classification for Community Engagement in practice from the field, in ongoing histories of civic renewal and institutional responsibility, and in complex questions of democracy, equity and participation. While the 20th anniversary of the first offering of the CE Classification for Community Engagement in the USA may have been the initial prompt for this study, what has resulted is both archival record and future-facing encouragement for the field.

A brief note on the study methodology and article development. The Carnegie Electives Central Office at the American Council on Education provided the resources and support necessary to bring this oral history project to fruition. Special thanks go to Anthony Moore and Malcolm Trueheart who provided the technical assistance for the video recordings of the interviews. Dr Elaine Ward and Diana Coello developed the research design and conducted the interviews in 2023 via Zoom. Interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes and were video recorded. Interviewees were broadly asked: (1) Why was the CE Classification developed? (2) Who was involved in founding, designing, developing and implementing the CE Classification? (3) What was the interviewee's recollection of their own experiences in the early design and implementation of the CE Classification? (4) What were the challenges and achievements? (5) What were their hopes and aspirations for the future? The interviews were transcribed using Zoom transcription and checked for accuracy by Ward and Coello, who also developed an early draft. Dr Margaret Malone developed the manuscript from the transcripts and wrote the Introduction. The finalised manuscript was

checked and approved by the authors, interviewees, Dr Marisol Morales and *Gateways'* co-founder and public historian Professor Paul Ashton.

The oral history that follows opens and closes with individual contributions from each interviewee, arranged alphabetically. Within, in the various sections, their recollections and observations are intertwined in conversation, exploring and extending each other's insights. Occasional, minor corrections or additions were made to ensure clarity and readability. Some details such as place names were added. Texts mentioned by the interviewees are included in full in the reference list at the end. This article is longer than most articles published in academic journals, but these conversations felt too generously given – and too important – to constrain. We hope you agree.

Introductions: 'Some beautiful human beings'

Amy Driscoll: Well, it goes way back. I think from the minute I started my academic career, the minute I finished a doctorate, I was engaged in partnerships, and it just sort of happened. So, my first position was at the University of Utah, and they hired me to participate in a partnership with the local schools. So, I represented the university with the schools, and I was kind of treated like a faculty member, even in the schools, which is great, because then you can get some things done and you have good communication. So, that was my beginning, and that was perfect. That's the kind of position I wanted. And then, I went from there to – where did I go from there – to Portland State University [where Dr Judith Ramaley was President]. I think there's a big thing across the street, the main street that says, 'Let knowledge serve the city.' It makes me almost cry because it's so perfect about what we care about. So, I applied for Director of Community University Partnership. It was kind of perfect, you know? At that point, I had lots of partnerships because of other things I'd been doing. So, we just went to work. We got a Learn and Serve America grant. And by the time I left there, we had service learning in every major. We had faculty all over campus doing community-based research. Every first-year student did something in community, something simple that they were ready for. And then, we had a senior capstone, that was groups of seniors from different majors, working together in community. So, it was everywhere. It was so exciting, and it was just exactly what we wanted. And we realised nobody was doing any assessments. So, we tried out a lot of assessment practices. That book – *Assessing the impact of service learning: A workbook of strategies and methods* – that we first published is still used today, and Campus Compact now has it.

I'll tell you something funny [about Judith Ramaley]. So, she would spend her weekends out in community with my [business] card when I was in that role. And on Monday morning, my phone would start ringing from community people who said, 'Oh, we met Judith this weekend, and she told us what you're doing. How can we get involved?' I mean, she was non-stop. It was amazing. And she knew everyone on campus so well. That's not a small campus. And she and I would have our meetings walking outside, and there are these park logs. And it was hard to have a meeting because she would stop and talk with everybody. That she knew something about them, whose son was having surgery. She knew who in somebody else's family had something going on, and had something exciting happen to them. They were drawn to her. So, a lot of my success was really Judith going around with my card in her hand. So, that [was] a great, great way to start.

So then, I went from there, never planning to leave Portland, but CSU [California State University] Monterey Bay was opening, and I was so touched by their intentions. I never intended to move to California, but once I met those students, I couldn't say no. We had amazing programs there and amazing people. During that time, we had an organisation called the AAHE, the American Association of Higher Education. And they had constant conferences about community engagement, which was wonderful. Faculty could come and present and do all the things they needed because it was totally focused on that. And the other good fortune I had was [meeting] Ernest Lynton, who was working on a big project. So,

what a lucky person I was. And I got a call from Carnegie. I think it was Pat Hutchings that called me and said that Lee [Shulman] wanted to talk with me about a new position and asked: Was I, would I be interested? And the minute she said a community service kind of elective, I was like, 'Oh my gosh, of course, I want to do that.' See what I mean, though? I feel like I was so fortunate every step of the way.

Tom Ehrlich: I've been, except for several rounds of service in the federal government, involved with teaching, learning and administration in higher education all my life. In 1995, my wife and I came back from Indiana University where I was president and started teaching in the Cal State system. I'm now still teaching at the Graduate School of Education at Stanford. But at that time, I became friends with Lee Shulman, who was to become the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. We started talking about service learning and anyone who knows Lee knows once you start talking to him, you're not going to stop. And we talked not quite continually, but with a lot back and forth. Lee was asked by the board of the Carnegie Foundation to be the new president. He said he would do that if Carnegie moved from Princeton, where it was, to Stanford, as a condition for his being involved. Soon after Lee was chosen, he asked me to join Carnegie as a Senior Fellow, and I accepted. Fortunately, one of the Carnegie trustees, Russ Edgerton, was probably the most provocatively interesting inquiring mind in the realm of higher education I've known. He was also a wonderful human being.

Matthew Hartley: I think my entry into this work really began when I was doing my master's degree in the mid-'90s. And I happened to take a course taught by an affiliated faculty member, Joann Stemmermann, on service learning. And service learning at the time was still relatively new. I got very interested in trying to understand more about this pedagogy, and at the same time, as I was pursuing my master's, I also had an opportunity to do a field experience as part of my coursework. And so, I ended up working at a very small liberal arts college outside of Boston called Bradford College. And Bradford was a very, very small, very progressive institution. And I was working with the provost and the vice president for student services, and they were very interested in doing a feasibility study to see whether faculty at that institution would be interested in engaging in service learning. They saw that as a way to really engage their students, to get reconnected to the community. We developed a community advisory board, and they were very instrumental in giving feedback on the curriculum itself. They were great partners in the effort. That was sort of the entry point, working in Bradford and that work. And it was really wonderful.

When I arrived at the University of Pennsylvania as a brand-new assistant professor, one of the very early people who reached out to me was Ira Harkavy, director of, at that time, the Center for Community Partnerships, now the Netter Center for Community Partnerships. And Ira had read some of my work, was really interested in what I was doing, and said, 'Let's start a conversation.' And so, we began with lunch. But those conversations have continued all of the 20–21 years I've been at Penn, and Ira's been a wonderful mentor and supporter.

So, the way that I first heard about the project was that Ira reached out to me. Someone had reached out to Ira and said, 'We'd like to identify someone there who could speak to the community engagement work at Penn.' And of course, Ira was the natural choice. So, they reached out to him, and Ira said [to me], 'There's going to be this meeting for this new classification that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is trying to develop on community engagement. And they're looking for two representatives from Penn, and I want you to be one of them,' which was a remarkable opportunity for me, because I was an assistant professor at that time. I was still very junior. But I had read an awful lot in my time about at least the work that existed. I had some sense of a lay of the land, but I think I brought sort of a different perspective because I was so new to it in a certain respect. I was part of the newer guard that was interested in this work. And so that was my understanding about how the sort of the different institutions were selected and how I was picked. But I felt very lucky.

Eugene Rice: Let me go really far back. I was born in the Dust Bowl in Southern Colorado in the '30s. Gives some idea of my age. My father was a county supervisor of the Farm Security Administration during the Dust Bowl in the middle of the depression. FDR [Franklin D. Roosevelt] came in with the Farm Security Administration, and it was a major initiative, reaching out to the community, and it made a world of difference. So, it was an incredible experience to have kind of growing up. Our family dining room had two pictures. On one side was Jesus, on the other side was FDR. And putting those together was a family problem. But unity engagement was a part of my early experience. My PhD at Harvard was in religion and society. All my professional life I have had faculty appointments in both the departments of religion and sociology. So, engagement was always a part of my teaching, my learning, my research. It was built into every course that I ever taught. But also, the search for meaning, not only how but why, and this was central. For me, democratic engagement and academic inquiry were always linked, but that's where we've had some struggle over the years. But that gives you a general idea of my background.

In the 1960s, I went to California to help start an experimental college, Raymond College at the University of the Pacific [UOP], which was in Stockton, California. It was essentially a minority majority community. And so, engagement. I was deeply involved in the life of Stockton and in the San Joaquin Valley. I almost changed my dissertation topic to 'prejudice in the valley': in 1882, we had the Chinese Exclusion Act, and [in] 1906, the Japanese could not own land. Even the white folks coming in from Oklahoma (the 'Okies') were discriminated against. When I started my teaching at UOP, there was an 'Okieville' in Stockton. They played a key role in the life of poor folks in the Valley. So, teaching in the Valley had a major impact on my life, and encouraged me to want students to get involved in the community and to give them a context. All of this had to do with my involvement in the engagement project.

During the 1960s, there were 365 experimental colleges initiated in the US, and these colleges really had, at the heart of them, this whole engagement process and active learning was central. So much of what we have in the engagement classification came out of that experience during the '60s.

Regarding my role at Carnegie: I'd written a paper entitled 'The new American scholar' taken from Emerson's 'The American scholar'. It is an argument that there's a different approach that we need in America, including a broader definition of scholarship. That was what we worked on at Carnegie. It obviously included faculty research. When I went to the Carnegie Foundation it was in Princeton. I worked with Ernie Boyer, who was president and had a deep commitment to the scholarship of engagement. So that connection was important. And 'The new American scholar' with which I started became the Carnegie report, *Scholarship reconsidered*. A key piece of that was the scholarship of engagement. Ernie Lynton (former provost of an experimental college at Rutgers) was [another] major intellectual driver behind this. He, too, was at Carnegie when I arrived. Both he and Boyer were committed to an engaged campus and to moving from theory to practice.

John Saltmarsh: I came into the work largely through what I think about now, in hindsight, as a teaching and learning pathway. And it started actually in the early 1990s. It was very much by chance, it wasn't something I was looking for. It wasn't intentional in any way, but it was at Northeastern University [which] was at the time and still is known for its co-op program. And the vice president of cooperative education came to me and asked me if I would run a brand-new service-learning program that the president was going to fund through co-op. I had an idea of what they were talking about. I don't think anybody on campus really knew what they were talking about. I remember very distinctly taking the principles of best practice that came out of the Wingspread Conference in 1990 and tacking it to my bulletin board and just following it. And yeah, that's where it started. And then, after doing it through co-op for a number of years, I brought it into my history classroom. And it was just one of those things that was fundamentally transformative and it's like, you can't go back.

After teaching service learning courses [at Northeastern], I really faced what it was, this deep ethical dilemma, which was what happened at the end of the semester with my partners and all of these relationships that I had built, and these commitments that we had made, and the services students had done. And then, it was just over. And unless I did another course or somebody else did, there was nothing. And so, it was a sense that there had to be a larger institutional response, and that's what led me into looking at organizational change and institutional work, which very much led me to the Campus Compact.

I was at the Compact for slightly less than a decade, but it was like things just aligned. Liz Hollander was the executive director. Brooke Beaird was there as the associate director. We were able to hire people like Nick Longo to run our youth work. And yeah, it was just a really remarkable time to be there. And I think we did make a big impact. And a lot of that work was around how do you institutionalise community engagement more broadly. I remember the conversations around ends and means – that service learning wasn't an end, it was a means to a larger end. The way we talked about it was in terms of the larger end of higher education's role in American democracy.

And then, so I ended up at NERCHE [the New England Resource Center for Higher Education] and also as a faculty member in the higher ed program ... Just by having a place like NERCHE, we could push against the traditions of the academy and do it with some legitimacy. And I had the cover to do it in the sense of having the centre as this institutional force and having tenure professionally. I can remember telling my staff on multiple occasions that I was going to take tenure out for a test drive: let's see how far we can push this before there's any backlash to it. And a lot of that was around community engagement work. We also did a lot of work around diversity, inclusion and equity.

So, I got involved [with Carnegie] after, let's see, when did I get involved? Probably after 2006. Amy asked me if I would be on what is now the National Advisory Committee.

Lorilee Sandmann: I'm delighted to be part of this conversation. I thought it was interesting and fun to reflect on my background and beginnings. And I'll go way back. I grew up almost on-site, immersed in my father's residential and commercial construction projects. I marvelled at the time-lapse process of going from a flat blueprint to a deep foundation, critical support, scaffolding the walls and roof enclosures, to the finishing touches, and finally, to a structure where generations would live their multidimensional lives. I saw how each structure was a creative adaptation, realised by taking basic plans and customising them for particular needs. I observed that multiple specialised tradespeople and subcontractors were necessary to design and complete each structure. So, I grew up with building in my bones, and that background has become a metaphor for my evolving agenda as an engaged scholar, through roles as a field educator and practitioner, an administrator and an academic.

Early in my career, I saw that the wicked problems I encountered in the field called for a different approach, and I like Donald Schön's description of them as problems in the swampy lowlands – messy and confusing, defying technical solutions, yet in those swamps lie the problems of greatest human concern.

In my case, after 17 years with the University of Minnesota Extension Service as a community-based extension educator and administrator, I joined Michigan State University, where I worked on a team led by the visionary Jim Votruba, then vice provost, alongside the feisty Professor Frank Fear. Through this work and as editor of *The Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, I engaged with many developmental and evaluative ideas about engagement as scholarship, including pilots and trials, as well as related research. Conducting workshops seems to be my forte across many aspects of community engagement.

So, I was in the orbit of the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement – not as an initial drafter, but as a constant reviewer and refiner of the emerging documentation. I have served, and continue to serve, on the National Advisory Committee, assisting with strategy and reviews and, more

directly, serving as a reader and evaluator of applications – particularly over the last two cycles, during which I read nearly 100 applications.

The most critical event for me in this arena began when I represented Michigan State University in the Kellogg Foundation-funded national project to document and peer-review professional service and outreach. Ernest Lynton and Amy Driscoll co-directed the project, and I deeply and unreservedly respect both of them. One morning, before the work group convened, Ernest Lynton and I met for a prearranged breakfast in a typical sterile college cafeteria. Leaning across the tiny table for two, he told me, most kindly, that he was dying and wanted me to step up and join Amy in the leadership effort. I was dumbstruck, immensely honoured and overwhelmed – and still am – by his request.

Background: 'Points Of Light'

John Saltmarsh: I think one way to look at it is to look at the 90s as a whole, as this period of multiple efforts at academic legitimacy. So, what I mean by that is you see things like we need to have a journal to be legitimate. So, a *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* gets created, and then within the next 10 to 15 years, a whole bunch of journals around community engagement. So, that's part of how you have legitimacy in the academic world. And then, there were organisations, professional homes. I remember when I started in this work, the only place that was in any way a gathering place for service learning was the National Society for Experiential Education. And by the late 80s, early 90s, that was sort of tearing that organisation apart in the sense that the experiential learning folks didn't want to be dominated by the service-learning folks. And that's where the action was. But there was no home for service-learning folks. And then, the Compact moved from service to service learning. And that became a place for folks who were doing the service-learning work. And then, again, a whole spate of organisations over the next 10 years that emerge – the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities and Imagining America. And there's a whole bunch of them. And then, they all start running conferences. IARSLCE [International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement] is another one. And part of that legitimacy was [that] we can actually do legitimate research that makes us credible. Yeah. So, all of those pieces and then mix into that – and I know this was a conversation at the Compact – was what if we had some sort of a classification system? That would give us more legitimacy.

Lorilee Sandmann: This was a time vibrating with the notion of transforming higher education, captured by Boyer's famous statement, published in what was then called the *Journal of Public Service and Outreach* (now the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*), in which he said: 'The academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic and ethical problems, and must affirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement.' I quoted that so often, I think it should be a refrigerator magnet. It was always a clarion call for higher education transformation. It was also a zesty time for thinking about the nature of knowledge itself – the non-linear view of knowledge flow, Lynton's socially responsive reorientation of the academy, and how knowledge is best generated. It's not always generated within the walls of the university alone.

At Michigan State University, we made a deliberate effort to define outreach as scholarship. At the time, the term was outreach, but it really referred to scholarly work that cuts across teaching, research and service. This notion was reflected in institutional policies and practices – espoused by Ernest Boyer in *Scholarship reconsidered*, by Ernest Lynton in *Making the case for professional service*, and by other points of light. At Michigan State, we worked to hammer out a conceptualisation and definition of community engagement, moving beyond in-reach and outreach into two-way mutuality – not to negate extension and outreach, but to go beyond them. We also worked diligently to document and reward this work; one of the first pieces – and one that still stands as a resource for planning and evaluating quality engagement – was *Points of*

distinction. The third component of the work at Michigan State was institutionalising it with the community through policies and procedures and professional development, including many briefings with department heads and chairs.

Michigan State was among the pioneering institutions – along with Portland State University under Judith Ramaley's leadership, Oregon State University under the presidency of John Byrne, and many others – in our efforts to define and institutionalise community engagement. That work foreshadowed the definition and framework of the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement. I also worked with many think tanks at the time. For example, the University of Michigan hosted the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good, convened by Tony Chambers, John Burkhardt and others. The APLU's [Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities] Kellogg Commission called for a broader national discourse. There were also Wingspread Conferences – for one of which Barbara Holland and I received funding from the Johnson Foundation. That conference highlighted the need for executive development in community engagement across higher education, which evolved into the Engagement Academy for University Leaders, still held annually.

Tom Ehrlich: At the end of the 1990s, Carnegie started first in some buildings near Stanford, and then right on the Stanford campus when its new facilities were built. Soon after that, Russ Edgerton and I, along with others, started talking about what we viewed as the insidious dimensions of the *US News & World Report* on college rankings. And the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was a kind of co-conspirator in doing the rankings in the sense that Carnegie created the system that colleges and universities are categorised: from research universities to 4-year institutions and liberal arts institutions, and community colleges. This approach made sense in terms of those doing research on higher education. But it made no sense from the perspective of potential college students and their parents. Instead of making clear that each category has an important place in higher education, research universities, which are a very small sliver of the 4 000 colleges and universities, were perceived as preeminent.

Led by Russ, we decided we needed ways to categorise campuses. This conviction led to the idea of Elective Classifications, which would enable colleges or universities to highlight that they were particularly strong in student learning, research, or something else. But to realise this new approach to categorising, we obviously needed a set of criteria for each category.

Eugene Rice: In 1994, I left Antioch College, where I was Dean of the Faculty, and went to Washington D.C. to the American Association for Higher Education. There, I became director of the Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards. If there is any one person that's responsible for the engagement classification, it's Russ Edgerton, president of AAHE. Russ had two fundamental commitments. One was learning from practice, and the other was doing something about the Carnegie ranking system. The irony is that Carnegie was intended to broaden the scope of higher education, and yet, it was the ranking system that was really pushing that very narrow sense of scholarship. So, Russ was driven by that, and the classification came out of his work. He was on the board of the Carnegie Foundation, both when it was in Princeton and later when it was at Stanford. He probably is singly responsible for Lee Shulman being the President of the Carnegie Foundation. And Lee's major contribution was when he was in medical school at Michigan State, that he wrote his book, *The wisdom of practice*. His book had a major impact on our thinking about this. And so, taking that whole emphasis on the wisdom of practice to Carnegie had a lot to do with the engagement classification. There was an epistemological shift there. It wasn't just theory or the ivory tower being the image, the narrative. It was a broader definition of scholarship, and both theory and practice [were] being pushed very hard.

Someone else that really made a major contribution to this whole effort was Bill Plater. He was at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis [IUPUI] for 17 years as provost. He mentored leadership in this field in a systematic, intentional way.

John Saltmarsh: I think it's always just a matter of timing, luck and people. But fortunately, Lee Shulman actually took that seriously, and he was nearing the end of his term at Carnegie. I'm thinking he probably had some legacy notions in mind that he wanted to leave there. And he wanted to leave something that was more substantial in terms of really changing higher education than the Basic Classification. And so, he was willing to think about a classification that would go outside of the Basic Classification and would actually push campuses to change. And that was the notion of the elective classifications. And the only one that took place while he was still [there] was the community engagement one. And again, it's partly people, so he was smart enough to bring Amy Driscoll in to lead that effort. So, you got Amy sitting there at the Carnegie Foundation with Lee as the president, and Amy could go down the hall and find Tom Ehrlich. You could go down the hall and find any number. Mary Huber was there. There were all these incredibly smart higher ed folks there.

Getting the Pilot Underway

Amy Driscoll: I think because we'd gotten so far with community engagement, Lee could see all the potential. There were already plenty of institutions who would want this. And the man is quite brilliant, as you know. And so, I spent a lot of time talking with him because I wanted to hear his thinking about this. What did he think was going to be important? I want to share one or two things that he was leading me with and he said, 'I want to make sure whatever we do really begins in inquiry and learning about the process of documenting community engagement.' Which we still need to work on, by the way. I still, I have very strong feelings about that. He wanted to make sure that we did it in ways that it would be useful information for the actual campus. And I think we're hearing that from people. So, I think we got that one. And then another one, he said he wants something that was practical. We wanted to use what they've actually got going on. So, we wanted to affirm the diversity on campuses because we knew people were doing it in very different ways. And that was very important. And we wanted something that would encourage ongoing development. So, when they finish an application, they keep going. They keep expanding. They keep improving. That was just a wonderful kind of vision for what we were to do. So, other than that, I had no direction. It was like, 'Okay, get going, get to work.'

So, I started by talking with the leaders of most of the national associations at that point … It was great. I was sitting in my own home in front of the fireplace talking with these incredible leaders. And they had such wisdom for what we did. They were all really excited. I mean, word had gotten out. So, they were like, 'Oh wow, this is going to happen.'

They urged me to be really careful about things like ratings or competition. They hoped that [we] wouldn't be any part of this. And thank goodness we haven't. And they wanted to make sure we paid attention to things that were interdisciplinary, and partnerships and reciprocity. So, they had really sound ideas and were very encouraging, and just ready to help and support, and do whatever to make this happen. From there, I decided I had to figure out a way to bring in voices from different places. And Lee gave me free rein. So, we selected campuses of different type. We had very tiny campuses and we had faith-based campuses and huge public campuses and a couple community colleges that we wanted that voice to be heard. So, we had, I think, I had 14 people coming, I mean – 14 campuses represented – and two of them were community colleges. So, we made sure that voice was there right from the beginning. Two really good places: Kapi'olani Community College, which was doing amazing things, and LaGuardia Community College, which is still going strong. I mean, Gail Mellow is amazing and that campus is first in so many

things. I called the presidents and asked if each would send two people to a working session, two working sessions. We'd pick up the hotel and food and all that kind of stuff, but would they be willing to send two people? And of course, I got some of the top people in the country coming to work. You know, I mean Bob Bringle and Julie Hatcher – Julie, who's still very involved. They were there. It was just a marvellous group of people.

Before they came, I'd done a huge literature review. By the way, Tom's book, *Civic responsibility and higher education*, is still a very strong source when we're doing things. It's just amazing. He was so ahead of his time. So, I'd decided even before people came that we needed a couple things that I felt were absolutely [essential]. So, when people came, that's what they worked with. We worked nonstop for like 3 days filling it in, overwhelming ourselves actually, you know? Coming up with way more than we could ever possibly use, but that was a good way to start. And so, that group left with this unwieldy kind of classification, everything possible to try out for six months. They all made a promise to do that, and then to come back. They came back 6 months later and said, 'It's overwhelming. We've got to [take] things out.' And they were absolutely right and we kind of knew that, but we pared it down to things that were absolutely critical, things that we said, 'If they're not doing this, they probably shouldn't be classified.' You know, like some starting points. I can't remember how long it was before we put it out for public and had our first classification round.

Matthew Hartley: I know the first meeting that I remember, and this I think was the one that happened in January of 2005. I think that meeting, Amy brought us to California, to Carnegie. And the idea was to both talk about the concept of the project and to begin to talk together. Very quickly, it became clear in those conversations as people shared about their work, that there were very different conceptions about what this work was and how it manifested itself on the different campuses. That was really quite interesting. And some of that made sense just because there were different types of institutions there. So, there were some institutions that were smaller, much more teaching-centred. There were other institutions for whom research was really important. And so, people were thinking about these things in different ways. There were regional differences too. But even simple things like terminology. There was a great diversity of terminology that people used: community engagement, civic engagement, democratic engagement. I mean, at one point in our conversations, there was a very interesting exchange that happened between Ira and a colleague from a public university, talking about the ways in which you describe this work. And Ira was talking about the importance and the centrality of linking this work to strengthening our democracy. And the other colleague said, 'That would be really challenging for some people at public institutions to be using that kind of terminology.'

The other thing that I remember us discussing is, if we were to describe the things that were happening on our campus that would sort of point [to] a commitment to this work, what would they be? Where would you look for this kind of work? What does it look like where you are? How is it valued? I think one area of commonality that emerged pretty early on was a sense that we're going to have to demonstrate [that] this work is not an add-on. That this work is linked to the academic core and the academic missions of these institutions. I can't recall if it was in the first meeting or in a subsequent meeting. We tried to talk about specific things that we might look for.

[What] I [also] remember talking about is that it seemed really important to be clear that this work was something more than just what happens to be occurring in the community. This is work that was really engaging *with* the community. And that was a really important distinction. Every institution, or every larger institution, and many smaller ones too, are doing work that is connected to the community in some way. But that's not community engagement. Community engagement is working in partnership with the community and trying to develop sort of like reciprocal partnering, and how do we think about that work?

Another challenge that emerged pretty quickly about this work is that the things that you would love to ask are things like, 'Well, what percentage of faculty are involved in this work?' And in a place as decentralised as Penn, that was just impossible to answer. There was just no way of coming up with an estimate of what that might be. Same thing with like, what percentage of courses might be service learning. How do we know? We had no clue. We knew how many people were doing this work and were supported through the Netter Center. So, we ended up going to the data we had. But after we had the initial meetings, pretty quickly, the goal became, for all of the representatives of the 14 institutions, to go back to their own institution and try and gather data themselves about what this looked like on their campus. And while there were some understandings about the kinds of things we'd look for, there was no sort of prescriptive framework that we were given. It was more just sort of think about how you would best present what's going on [in] your campus.

I think some of the challenges that we faced early on had to do with the fact that very few institutions had evaluation or assessment systems in place that would allow anyone to easily capture this work. We realised that it was going [to] be important to develop some almost baseline that you'd want to look for at other institutions to determine: is this work real or not? Because one of the things that is true is that if you set foot on, I would say most campuses, colleges or universities, and begin talking to people, you could find many examples of community-based work. Many. And back then, it would would've been true too. Because one of the challenges is you can basically have a situation where you have an institution where there are a thousand flowers blooming. But the question is, does that constitute a garden? That was the fundamental challenge. And I think that's the sort of struggle with those early foundational indicators: what are the things you'd want to look for? Those kinds of things became important to determine whether there was an actual garden there as opposed to just the 10 000 flowers.

Acknowledging The Pilot: Hard Work and Highlights

Tom Ehrlich: Why were we successful? The primary reason is that we pushed really hard to make the new approach happen. My own interest was heightened because of my strong commitment to encouraging college students to engage in public service as a vocation or avocation. I was a member and then chair of the Commission on National and Community Service, which President H.W. Bush appointed to design a national program of service. And that led to the Corporation for National and Community Service, which I was also on the board of, under President Clinton. I saw a need for a new classification that would highlight campuses doing the best work in preparing students to be civic leaders.

Matthew Hartley: Well, I think the early wins were, I think Amy did a masterful job of leading us through the process. People were thinking about this work in very, very different ways. And she managed to sort of, it would've been possible for us to either go in every possible direction and not do anything meaningful, or for there to be certain rigid guidelines put in place and people would've dropped out because it just didn't fit who they were. And she managed to really traverse that ground beautifully and sort of give everyone an opportunity to sort of like highlight the ways that they were thinking about it but also encouraging us to think about how can we sort of like frame what we all are doing in ways that would resonate across a wide variety of people so that people could see themselves in this work. So, I think doing that conceptual work was a real early win.

Amy Driscoll: You know, I think one of the wins was getting all those presidents to send two incredible representatives for this work session. And I talked a lot with each of them because they wanted to really understand what was going on. But they became great speakers for us. They were great contacts and would tell their other small campuses about this. By the time we offered this the first time, there was no question. I

thought it'd be a little group. No, I think it was like 60 or something, which we didn't expect. But word got out really fast because people were ready and wanting to do this. We didn't have to beg anybody to do it. I think that start said a lot about people being ready for this, about people wanting to be known as that kind of a campus. You know, they'd already been working hard, but I think that kind of response said a lot about the readiness of the community – the national community.

And I just consider that pretty strong. The other thing that I still remember so vividly was how hard those first group – those 14 campuses – how hard they worked. I mean, sometimes we'd be going from early in the morning till very late at night. And no question, they were there. Wow. Yeah. And then when they came back after using it, they were full of insights. You know, they were like really clear about things that shouldn't be there; things that were missing. They [were] so powerful. That was, I feel like one of my best decisions was doing that pilot with them.

That first batch of classification people, campuses, and what they did with it then, boy, they were bragging. I loved it. They made sure that everyone in their community knew about it. They wrote stuff in public journals and national journals. They wanted everybody to know that they were so proud of that. And that just felt amazing to have it be valued like that, you know. So, we did the second one, and again, got a much bigger group than we ever expected. But it was during the second one that I realised I couldn't be operating as one person because I was operating like one person. Things just started happening. And then by the second one, there were enough times where I felt I didn't want to make the decision. So, we started building that National Advisory group. That was the beginning of it. And I should have started with it, but I didn't have anything to build on, you know? But I got to a point where I was like, 'No, I want another person looking at this'.

Lorilee Sandmann: The first win was the uptake, both in the number of institutions and in the types of institutions. A second early win was that some AAU [Association of American Universities] research-intensive universities invested in the application and achieved classification. It was important to have these institutions involved, as they served as aspirational models for many others. A third win, I think, was that not all applicants were classified. So why was that a win? It sent the message to the field that the assessment was not to be taken lightly – that classification was not a *fait accompli*, but that standards and criteria were applied seriously. Non-classification served as much of an educational message for institutions as confirmation of classification did for others. I remember a follow-up call with the president of an institution that one would think would certainly be engaged. When we provided the rationale for the rejection – the incompleteness and sloppiness of the submission – she was embarrassed and made sure that didn't happen again. So, non-classification served, as I mentioned, as an educational point as well.

And then there was another big win in all of this, or a highlight, which was that the applicant pool could be mined for trends and issues in the institutionalisation of community engagement. In fact, after the first round, Courtney Thornton, Audrey Jaeger and I co-authored an article in *New Directions for Higher Education* that examined this first wave of Carnegie-classified institutions. Lastly, I think the win was that the elective classification has been sustained.

John Saltmarsh: I think the highlights at the time, as far as I can go back and recreate that, I think are actually very similar to what the highlights are now. It was, in reading these applications, what we learned about community engagement that was going on across the country, which is still what happens. Every application you read, you just feel like you learn a ton. And so, with the National Advisory Committee, when we were first asked to review, there was no compensation or anything. And at one point, I know Amy felt badly and said, 'Do you want to continue?' And everybody wanted to continue, because everybody said, yeah, this is so interesting. I absolutely want to do this. Yeah. So, that was the real motivating factor.

I think the reason that I saw it and still see it as so important was almost the immediate impact it had in terms of motivating campuses. And in some ways, it's the wrong thing in terms of it falls right into the prestige culture of higher education. But on the other hand, it was a huge motivator. I can remember being in meetings where we were doing a workshop on the Carnegie, and we'd have small groups and I'd go by a group of people from a campus, and they'd be talking among each other and they'd say, 'No, we have to figure out how to change our promotion tenure guidelines because Carnegie says we have to', which is just this amazing thing: 'because Carnegie says we have to'. So, Carnegie just carried weight, it carried prestige, and it made people do things differently.

So, when the classification first comes out in 2006, there's a whole set of optional questions. And embedded in those, I think there were six of them [on] promotion tenure guidelines. About 30 per cent of the campuses answered that question. So, most of them were like, we're not going anywhere near that. I think the way it was designed that way was, and again, I wasn't part of this, but I'm guessing that the group putting together the framework felt like if they pushed too hard, they weren't going to get campuses to apply. And certainly, in the early 2000s, pushing too hard on the promotion tenure was going to turn some people off. So, it was optional. That changed really quickly though, because after the first cycle, the National Advisory Committee said, unanimously, this can no longer be an optional question. And part of it was the field was changing, and everybody knew from the late 1990s on that if you didn't tackle promotion tenure, you weren't going anywhere, because it went right to the core culture of the institution. It has to be one of the questions that everybody has to answer. And then, it just evolved from there again, because the field evolved, because when it was no longer optional, what we found [at first] was everybody said they were doing it, that it was either in their guidelines or they were changing [it]. And what they meant was it was in the service portion of the guidelines, which meant it really wasn't there, at least for most institutions.

And so, then the question had to be refined, like, so where is it in the guidelines? And then, it was refined more so that, if it's not in the guidelines, what are you doing to try to change that? So, that question continually evolves, but it also becomes much more central to the application. It's central to this notion of institutionalisation. And we had a really interesting conversation just recently, because in this cycle, the 2024 cycle will be the first time that campuses, that we're going to have a group of almost a hundred campuses that will be applying for the third time. So, they've reclassed and now they're coming back to reclass for a second time. And the question was, if they haven't changed their promotion and tenure guidelines, will they be reclassed, right? Because now, they've had 15 years to do it.

Amy Driscoll: Well, I think the first time that we had to refuse a classification for somebody was really hard because people were so counting on it. It was really hard. And we started or I started the practice that, if they were denied, they would get a phone call with a lot of information and a lot of support. They felt really bad that first bunch that didn't get in. It wasn't a lot of people, but it was still so important to them. So, we would do really supportive lengthy phone calls, talk it through. And of course, they would appear next time. And they're doing that again. You know, we're doing that again. I didn't call all the ones that got it, you know, because there was no way one person could do that. But I felt that calling anybody that was denied was so important. For me, that's a really big one. I was just determined we had to do that. I mean, that might seem like a problem, but it wasn't. It was a chance to educate. It was a chance to support and encourage the good things they were doing. Because for a lot of them, it was brand new. I mean, like all of us were struggling with how to do it, and what would work, and what wouldn't work, and what was missing.

Tom Ehrlich: We found that a key reason many campuses applied for the classification was because they wanted to be able to say publicly that they cared deeply about the civic health of their communities. The Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement came to be a badge of honour for those campuses. Others chose to go through the process of applying for this classification both because they

wanted their students to be civically engaged wherever they were after graduation and because they realised that the very process of applying for the classification could enhance the strength of teaching and learning in this arena.

Finally, it is worth stressing that for college and university presidents, a focus on civic engagement was 'the high road'. They were spending lots of time on budgets, dealing with recalcitrant trustees, difficult faculty, and so forth. But preparing students for civic work was a high road that they wanted to be on.

Missing Voices

Matthew Hartley: Well, I think one of the challenges that the project had to sort of grapple with early on was that Amy was in the position of trying to pilot a really ambitious and exciting project in a way that was manageable. And so, because [of] that, she did pick 14 institutions to be a part of the original group. But even if you pick 14 of every kind of institution – if you think the difference between public, private, baccalaureate granting, master's granting, doctoral granting, high research, low [research] and all that, you're not even touching on one of each. I mean, the diversity of American higher education is so great that it's really hard to capture that in a group of only 14 institutions… Spelman, I know, was part of the original group, but I don't believe there was another HBCU [Historically Black Colleges and Universities].

Lorilee Sandmann: I spent my professional career at major, research-intensive, large urban, and land-grant universities. That was the sector I was deeply networked in – providing leadership and speaking knowledgeably about it – compared with others who could bring perspectives, for example, from smaller private liberal arts colleges. But within that sphere, some voices were definitely missing at the time. I'm glad we're addressing that now, both in the current makeup of the National Advisory Committee and in outreach to such institutions and voices. The voices I felt were missing were Indigenous peoples, minorities, community partners, community colleges, and specialised colleges and universities. I was so pleased in the last round to see an exemplary application from the Morehouse School of Medicine. Since then, we've recruited Tabia Henry Akintobi to the National Advisory Committee to represent such perspectives.

Eugene Rice: Yes, it was clear that Black and Brown voices were largely missing. A major exception was Edgar Beckham. Edgar was at Wesleyan University, one of the deans, and was always involved. He went to the Ford Foundation and was able to fund much of that activity. In fact, there was that whole emphasis that really gave a shot in the arm to service learning (that he funded). He was just extraordinarily omnipresent. He was there, he was always there, and he did it in a way that was effective. We all learned from Edgar Beckham. [Another] major leader was Nadinne Cruz. She took major responsibility for bringing minority students into the process and getting recognition for their approach, their epistemology, their understanding of learning.

Sustaining The Classification

John Saltmarsh: Yeah. So, let's go back to the beginning. So, 2006, Lee is still there. 2008, Lee's still there. But even in '08, it's still considered like this experiment. We don't know whether this is going to work or not. And there was no guarantee that it would, because if by 2008, like only 15 campuses had applied, it would've been seen as not something that's sustainable and there's not enough interest in this. And then, so Lee left right after that, but also the decision was made that it would become permanent. And so, by 2010, it wasn't an experiment anymore, it was going to be ongoing. And it went into the same 5-year cycle as the Basic Classification. So, then there was predictability in year 2010, 2015, like, it was going to happen. And I think at that point, we're also seeing more applications to it. [But] it took a while for it to get into the

water. And then, I'd say there was this critical period. By 2009 or so, I had been hearing in the grapevine that Carnegie was going [to] drop the classification. There was new leadership. All the higher ed folks were leaving. And I just picked up the phone one day and called Tom Ehrlich and said, I don't know what's going on, but if you're looking for a new home for the classification, we could take it on here at NERCHE.

But in terms of trying to sustain it, it was like, how do we think about a business model for this? And it clearly wasn't going to work on a few thousand dollars from the Foundation and anything I could pilfer from the university. And so, that's what led to the first conversation around having an application fee. Because the thinking was if we could have an application fee, we would have a reliable ongoing source of revenue to be able to actually administer the classification. And the response that we got from the Foundation was absolutely not. The thinking there, and it's the spiel, you'll see this play out over and over again. But the thinking there was that there was no fee for the Basic Classification. So, we weren't going to charge a fee for the elective classification. And it's not terribly rational. So, then we go through the 2010 cycle, we're back in the same predicament again. Fortunately, [we were able to] navigate that, so that we could have an application fee. The National Advisory Committee said, charge this amount. And then, the Foundation said, no, you can't do that. We have to charge this amount. It was a little bit odd, but it was their classification. And then, even the application fee wasn't really sustainable.

And then, the other part was by 2015, we had the first time for a reclassification. So, that interim period wasn't just sitting around waiting for the next classification. It was trying to figure out what does a reclass document look like? And having to create a whole new documentation form. And the field is all changing at the same time, and we're trying to revise. And again, there's no money for this. So, all of it is coming out of NERCHE's budget. But the thing was, it felt really important to just make sure that this thing happened and that it was reliable and people could count on it.

[Later] I started to look for a new home for Carnegie and the Lynton Award. A lot of this early work was just built around relationships. Like who do you know, who can you trust? Who has the ability to do this? And at that point, Brown University was looking for a new director [for the Swearer Center]. Matthew Johnson ended up getting it. And so, once he was there, I approached him and said, would you be interested in taking on the Carnegie? And so, we moved it to Brown and that very much shaped the work of the Swearer Center. That's how all that happened. And moving it to Brown also meant that the Foundation had to, I mean, the Foundation had to do the move. I couldn't do the move because all I am, I'm a steward of the classification. It belongs to the Carnegie Foundation. It's their classification. I'm just the caretaker. So, we ran the 2020 out of Brown, and it was a really good cycle. We did a revision of the application again and it was well-supported, because it's where there were the resources.

Internationalisation

John Saltmarsh: Yeah, so again, for me, this comes from the field. It was campuses outside the United States that were asking for this. So, this would've been around the 2010 period, they wanted to be able to do it. And again, this is sort of the evolution of the foundation… I would bring this to the National Advisory Committee. They would say, go to the foundation and see if we can do an international. And I would go to the Foundation, and they would say absolutely not. It was like the same logic. The Basic Classification is only for US institutions; therefore, the elective will only be for US. And it was only the Irish pilot that broke that open. And you remember that we had to say to the Foundation, let's see how this works. And they were convinced after that, that this would actually be a good idea.

I think the significance of it is that higher education works in a global sector; it's all connected. And so, the more that this is seen as important in any one place in the world, it's seen as important in other places. So, I think it's only good for the movement. And I would say that, in really good ways, it pushes, I think, everybody to do their work from a different perspective. We learned in Ireland, we learned a lot [about]

what does this mean in a different cultural context, in a different context of national politics and funding? It looks really different. What can we learn from that in the United States? What can other countries learn from each other?

Amy Driscoll: I'm sure that we have the potential to expand to other countries. And if that's going to honour it and make it stronger, that's great. I don't have that on my calendar or my agenda, but that says a lot that another country would even consider [it]. It is pretty amazing. I don't know too many things that are being done like that, you know? I do have this little piece in me that wants to make sure it's really community engagement, as well as academic engagement. When I read our materials, sometimes I look for the word community and I don't see it enough … Yeah, I'm kind of like the watchdog again. Make sure the word community is in there and now we're adding civic, and that's going to expand in another direction.

I think [internationalisation] has a lot of possibilities. You could start at a big level, a high level, of putting two countries together, talking about some things that matter if it gets to that point. I think we can learn from the Canadian version. I think they can learn from the US version. I mean, if we're doing this well, we should be talking about it all the time, getting together all the time. Talk with leaders in those other countries. I'm just sure that they've got some ideas. And even if it's just some cultural things that we think, oh, we could try that, you know. I think there's a lot possible and I think it's prestigious. You know, it's not hurting the US any to be the leader in this. We need some more of that actually. So anyway, that's what I think about having it in other countries. Very good.

Lorilee Sandmann: I find it very exciting and enriching for all the reasons the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement was initially established. It validates and amplifies the work globally. It offers a valuable opportunity to appreciate diverse, culturally sensitive, and appropriate conceptualisations, implementations, and evaluations. And it provides an incredible opportunity for information sharing. So, I believe it's important to keep the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement available in and outside the United States.

Reflections: Impact And Change Over The Past Two Decades

Lorilee Sandmann: The Carnegie Elective Classification has had a major impact on the field. Building on prior thought and experience, it's been pivotal in so many ways. I think it's been symbolically critical that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which has classified higher education institutions since 1970, sanctioned and gave its imprimatur to community engagement by offering a classification opportunity on this topic. Its creation reflected this broader counterbalance in higher education. It was critical not only symbolically but also practically, in that it codified a definition and identified what an engaged institution could look like. And it provided a framework for both self-study and assessment of that as an institutionalised venture within an institution … it's still amazing to me as I work with campuses. They say, 'Well, we have to come to a definition.' And I say, 'Start with the Carnegie Classification definition, the community engagement definition. That's really the gold standard to start [with]. And then think about how that plays within your mission and within your key priorities.'

I think there has been a shift from program institutionalisation to institutional transformation, marked by growth and improvement. Again, I think the Carnegie classification, with its emphasis on assessing the institution rather than a particular program, helped. We moved from simple lists and practices to more integrated, complex frameworks and models. Nancy Franz's 2009 article, 'A holistic model of engaged scholarship: Telling the story across higher education's missions,' is one I often return to and share with others when we discuss frameworks for engaged scholarship – how we practise, document and evaluate it.

Tom Ehrlich: The road was not always smooth, but the Classification served an important role in higher education. Civic engagement is an arena that's critical for the future of higher education, particularly in light of declining public trust. Frequently, we heard from campus leaders that the application process enabled them to learn what was actually going on at their colleges and universities in terms of civic learning. It also enabled different parts of campuses to learn what other parts were doing and to strengthen their own work as a result. On the whole, the application process worked well, supplemented by members of the advisory board and other advisors who were available to help campuses succeed.

Amy Driscoll: It's considered very prestigious. And that's good, we want that. People, you know, once they do an application, they realise that even that process is going to improve what they're doing, expand what they're doing, honour what they're doing. That was one of the things Lee said, 'Let's make sure this is honouring this incredible work people are doing while still having standards.' You know, not everything is great, but even in campuses that don't get classified, there's still so much good there. There're so many good things happening.

Here's the thing that happened. For a lot at the beginning, they started working much more across the campus. They realised that people in engineering were doing something, but they hadn't even been talking to them, or they realised that psychology was doing some great things. So, it started bringing together people on their campuses. And just as Lee said, people did feel honoured. Yeah, they did feel honoured. They knew there were standards they were meeting and meeting well. It wasn't an easy classification by the way. I think the first time people got [the application], they were like, 'Oh my God, they really intend for us to fill all this out?' And it's bigger now, bigger than ever. We get a little bit of insights about that. But I think mostly people are loving doing it and just feel honoured to be able to do it.

Tom Ehrlich: Service learning wasn't well known in the early 1980s. Relatively few courses did a good job of integrating community and academic affairs. And many faculty thought adding community service to their academic courses was a waste of time. But that perception slowly changed as a result of research choosing that academic learning could be strengthened by integrating it with community service through structured reflection. The classification helped make that change happen.

Eugene Rice: You know, as I look back, hegemony was so powerful and the focus on research so dominant, and the funding available to support faculty work was so central that a number of the serious faculty did not get involved in engagement who probably would've done so otherwise. So, I think we had a narrative there that we really needed to address. It was really, really critical that we did take on the scholarship of engagement and that it had an academic dimension to it. That was what we always struggled with in service learning, right? That was the key issue. Engagement had earlier been disconnected from the academic curriculum, from the faculty, and it was kind of going into the community and students learning on their own. The YMCA was a very active participant in there, but again, it was disconnected from the academic program. Service learning particularly brought those together. And the engagement classification put an emphasis on that, but it had to be connected to the scholarship of engagement.

Well, every time we go through one of those 5-year reviews, this would come up. And so, particularly John Saltmarsh when he got involved in it, he pushed that very hard. He was, of course, a serious historian and he brought in Matthew Hartley and others who really took this agenda seriously. So [too did] Ed Zlotkowski… He was a specialist in Shakespeare, made service-learning courses work for him in his classroom teaching and he really drove that whole agenda very hard. And in fact, some of us referred to him as the Johnny Appleseed of Service Learning. I would go someplace to speak and I'd find out that Ed had just been there. He'd already given half of my speech. So, it was always a great relationship.

John Saltmarsh: Well, let me see if I can boil this down to maybe a couple of things. One is there is a history in the movement from at least the early 90s where there was a sense of community engagement being depoliticised, and part of that was written into funding. So, money that came out of the Corporation for National and Community Service was explicit in the sense it couldn't be used for political purposes for organising campaigns. Any of the civic behaviours that we would actually like to see people engage in, you couldn't do. That was tied to, but not entirely connected, to arguments that were made around – and we still have it today – around indoctrination that by doing this kind of work in the community, you were pushing certain values and perspectives onto students. I think we still struggle with that to the present day. And I think part of that struggle has [been] what has inhibited the community engagement work from being work around building democracy. Because as soon as you start thinking about it that way, it is political work, because it takes account of questions of power and privilege, positionality, identity, implication. It's political. It has to do with resources and power. And we don't like to think about education at large as being political, and we certainly don't want to think about community engagement as being political, even though both are inherently political.

Matthew Hartley: It's really puzzling that there was not more of a direct connection between the community engagement or civic engagement movement and the work around diversity, equity and inclusion. There were people early on that were talking about that, for sure. But they seemed to be parallel conversations. And so, I think having more representatives from other institutions that might've been thinking about this work in quite different ways would've been really quite interesting and enriching.

[But], having seen successive groups of institutions apply for the classification, you really see a remarkable development that's occurring, that the early sorts of people we were looking for – can we see some evidence of that garden and gardeners that I was talking about? And now, many of the institutions that are applying have very rich data. They're gathering data on this work. And so, I think it's important to not lose track of the fact that great things are happening, and new innovations all the time too. We saw all sorts of really wonderful work happening around democratic education and around sort of really trying to think about universities' roles in our democracy and great work linking community engagement work with DEI [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion] efforts on many campuses. So, there's been tremendous growth and changes.

But I think that the work, as I think about where we sort of need to go next, to me, still, one of the most important areas that we need to focus much more on is the way in which we demonstrate that this work has made a difference in the community. How do we show [this], and not just by listing projects? Now, some of that is important. And as I say, it is important to remember that we need to be realistic about the roles that our colleges and universities can have in sort of transforming our communities, because we certainly know there can be language that's fairly hyperbolic out there about the role of colleges and universities in changing communities. And it's all, I think they can be really important partners in that work. And maybe even essential partners in this work, but still partners, nonetheless. Not the only people doing it. This is not [about] colleges and universities saving the country. It is sort of like we are part of a larger puzzle of people that need to come together in order to benefit everyone. But then how do we measure the impact that we're having, those collective efforts? How are we seeing that those kinds of broader partnerships that draw people from a wide variety of areas to sort of like make a difference, how do we show that?

John Saltmarsh: For me, the turning point is Eric Hartman's piece in the *Michigan Journal*, where he says, 'We actually have to say we are being partisan here. We're partisans for democracy.' And that's actually a really good thing. And I think that is where we have to stand. I think it challenges the larger field of education, and higher education in particular, to say this is a space of politics. And recognising it for that instead of trying to run away from it. So, there's a history there: if we look at community engagement

as a movement, there's a new period in the movement, which I mark by Tania Mitchell's work around critical service learning. So, broaden it out into critical community engagement. And so, the critical here is putting that sort of lens of power and privilege and positionality, identity – all of that – in terms of how we understand service [and] community engagement.

And then, it fundamentally changes the way that we think about it. It also fundamentally changes the way that we think about who's engaged in that work, both faculty and students. And so, if you start to understand it from the perspective, particularly of people of colour involved in this work, then you see it through a different lens, and you understand these questions of power differently. That for me is very much connected to that democracy work that we were talking about. And the connection for me is always Edgar Beckham. Edgar was the first African American dean at Wesleyan University. So, he was there before he came to the Ford Foundation. And Ford funded a lot of our work at the Compact. And so, Edgar was very supportive of what we were doing. And every time I was in a meeting where Edgar was in the room, he would always, at the end of our spiel, he would interrupt us and he would say, 'When you talk about revitalising American democracy,' he said, 'are you talking about historical democracy or aspirational democracy?' And I have to say, when Edgar would say that stuff, I didn't really get what he was talking about, but what he was talking about was, if you're talking about historical democracy that excluded people like him from participation in the system, he didn't want anything to do with that. But if you're talking about aspirational democracy committed to equity, then yeah, he's all in. And so, that's the connection. That's the work we need to be doing. But if we're not doing that work, then what's the point?

Well, in some ways, it goes towards explicating what the second half of the definition is in the Carnegie classification. To go back to where that second half came from. So, in the pilot and in 2006 and 2008, the definition that Carnegie provided was the first half of the definition around mutuality, reciprocity, collaboration. The second half of the definition was added after we took it over at NERCHE. And the second half is around what's the purpose of this? Not what's the process, but what's the purpose?

That very much came out of the 'Democratic engagement white paper'. Again, it's what's the practice in the field? What are we learning from that? And then, what are the levers we can pull? And there was no fanfare around this at all. We just added a new part to the definition. And it came out of the field; this is the way that the field talked about it; it centred democracy in the Carnegie definition of community engagement. We have not really put any meat on that definition. And I think now, in the period that we're in, in this period of critical community engagement in the post-George Floyd moment, that now is the time to actually put some meat on it. And I would also just say, I'll say one other thing. Leadership matters. Having Marisol Morales lead the Carnegie classification for community engagement, at this point, I don't have to convince Marisol that this is a good idea. She immediately gets it and is driving it. I don't even need to drive it. She's doing it.

Looking To The Future

Amy Driscoll: I feel a little careful sometimes because sometimes I feel like we might go back to where we were, which was, we used community as our sample for studies and things like that. But they were never involved in the conversation. We can't ever go back to that kind of thing. And I think we have to be really careful with that, you know, of making sure community really is up there with us. So, I'm kind of a watch person on some of that, you know?

Lorilee Sandmann: First, I remain committed to the importance of community engagement itself – its principles and practices – and to supporting the difficult work of institutionalising it. Second, I'm particularly energised by the reclassification process and applications. As you mentioned, interest is up, and I'm glad to see that because it's an evidence-based, reflective practice focused on what's changed since the

original classification. Because the structure includes a narrative response, it lets institutions explain what's changed since their previous classification, tell the campus story over a longer period of time, and indicate its trajectory for the future – it's future-looking. I have found it very inspiring to see these institutions stay committed and continue to thrive in adaptive ways – in some cases deepening the work, in other cases trying new approaches – which leads to my third motivation for staying involved: I have found this, particularly when reviewing the reclassification applications, to be the best professional development. It provides a documented scan of the field.

For example, in the last round, it was eye-opening to see the impact of executive transitions – in some cases, institutions had three provosts and two or three presidents since their last classification. It was also informative to see how institutions were leveraging their engagement with funders, confirming that community engagement could generate revenue rather than simply function as a cost centre. It was a good chance to get a handle on some of the most innovative practices underway, including creative programs and initiatives, and to see how institutions were integrating community engagement into institutional priorities such as student success and DEI. Being involved is [a] wonderful professional development. Beyond staying motivated by the work itself, I'm also motivated by the people – professional colleagues, former students who are now administrators, and personal friends. I stay motivated because passionate, vibrant, smart younger fellow travellers are on this journey, working not only to sustain the work but also to elevate it in ways consistent with the evolving times.

[But] I would like to see community partners involved from the very beginning. Of course, they should be part of the initial committee that decides which data to mine and then be involved in the analysis, so they are co-generators of that application.

I have several aspirations for what comes next. One is that this work be fully embraced by the next generation – by leaders in higher education and the community working together, by those doing professional development for the field, and by the next generation of serious scholars building on all of this. This leads to my next aspiration: evaluating impact. I think we still need to improve how we evaluate the impact of community engagement in general, and it would be interesting to do more evaluation of the impact of the classification itself and of the institutionalisation of community engagement. Art Levine did great work I've drawn on many times – *Why innovation fails*. A follow-up study is needed on the innovation of community engagement as it becomes institutionalised and embedded across the university and higher education more broadly. I would love to see that follow-up done using his framework. I think it's time.

I have a couple more aspirations. One is that the work be sustained and evolved – there's an evolutionary component to it. We still need to strengthen leadership, particularly executive leadership, and deans' and department chairs' understanding of an embedded, engaged scholarly agenda, so they speak, own and support the work – not just speak of it as public relations or hubris, but truly own an authentic engagement philosophy and orientation, and interpret community engagement within their own disciplines. What I found in reviewing the reclassifications over the last couple of rounds was that, although executives were turning over, deans and department chairs were picking up and sustaining a community engagement agenda within their units – the leadership, actually, was coming from them. But the whole area of leadership is one where we still need improvement. We still need to appreciate engagement as scholarship – the onus is still on faculty, contingent faculty, academic professionals and others to frame the work as such, so it can be documented and rewarded appropriately. And there's one area where we have failed dismally and still need improvement: coordinated professional association support.

My message to the next generation is this: 'Do it. Get into the field, into the community, do the bidirectional work – don't just study it; actually experience it.' I think that's so rich and robust, consistent with the work. Don't do it alone: seek and adopt a mentor, find collaborators, build alliances and participate in professional meetings – we have many – that serve as important venues for sharing knowledge and

experience, field building and collaborative gathering. Hang out with people who challenge and support you and nourish the life of the mind. Someone once told me, 'Don't be an information hoarder.' So, we should not only do the work of generating and co-generating knowledge but also disseminate it, so we aren't information hoarders ourselves.

Tom Ehrlich: Unfortunately, elective classifications other than the Community Engagement Classification were never launched. I hope that will happen now.

I will also add that in my experience, multiple overlapping, intersecting interventions are needed to prepare a student to be an engaged citizen. There is no magic bullet. We need more good research on what interventions work best.

Matthew Hartley: Well, I think one of the challenges that we're going to still face, and this is true in our country and it's true in many other countries as well, is that there are going to continue to be pressures for higher education to be defined in extremely narrow economic terms. That higher education exists to prepare students for jobs. And no one disputes that that's not an important purpose. We want our students to be successful, and having successful careers is important. The problem is when that becomes the overriding feature and purpose of the enterprise. And so, I think that's going to continue to be a real challenge for the work. But I think it's also a great possibility, because I still think that there are many people that are drawn to higher education and many students who come, who go to college hoping for something larger. They're not looking to just get their ticket punched. They want to sort of like learn what does this world mean and what is my place in it and what difference can I make?

I think another big challenge that we're facing in this country is the ongoing racial reckoning. And this is a time when I think we have an opportunity to make great gains in really rethinking who we want to be as a country and how we want to sort of like engage in a productive way through this racial reckoning. And I think that this work has great opportunity to contribute to that, but historically, has not contributed as much as it might have.

A related challenge is just the tremendous danger that there is for our democracy in being a highly politically polarised society in which people, it's not just that people can't come to some common ground on understandings about basic principles, about who we are. It's the fact that people can't actually come to consensus about what is true, what an actual fact is… And I think that's going to be a real challenge for this work: how do we sort of like inoculate ourselves against people being able to sort of like fundamentally spread credible lies in ways that just make it impossible for us to talk with one another?

I think that next piece is sort of like, how can we also get a better sense about the broader impact that we're having in this work? One of the challenging areas in several of the rounds that we've had has been how to make sense of the data about who is being partnered with in the community. And also, what is the nature of that partnership? Because one of the things that we see is institutions listing many partnerships that are occurring. And then in some cases, a near absence of any language around reciprocity or partnership.

I don't want to paint an overly negative picture, but there's a range of responses there that speak volumes about institutions that, by almost anything that we could measure, in terms of the Carnegie framework, look like they're doing wonderful work, but from the perspective of their community partners, it's a little bit like they're not seeing it necessarily.

Eugene Rice: Well, I think one of the challenges we still face is the dominance of individualism. That American democracy requires both freedom, but also responsibility. And how you bring those together. In fact, they talk about the paradox of American democracy; that it pulls in two different directions. And this to me is a national issue. And the individualism or the focus on the self has kind of taken it over. And

even when students are thinking about the purpose of education, and they think about it as the first job or instrumental knowledge or short-term knowledge that they can count on when they get out of college. But what we are really up to is education for a lifetime of imaginative work. So, I think that the dominance of individualism is a serious problem. Higher education has not been good at pushing community responsibility. And that's what the engagement process is all about. The maldistribution of wealth, the separation of haves and the have-nots, and higher education has continued to go along [with this] – check the salaries of presidents. It's been the corporate pattern that we followed. And I think this is making higher education almost no longer viable for some families. And then the growth, the dominance of the technology that has a multiplying effect: they take, they begin to take over. So, I think these are all challenges that are still there and that we have to cope with.

So, I think this is an ideal time, and we really need people with extraordinary imaginations to get involved in this. So, I think it couldn't be a better time. It's a difficult future, but we're going to have to pull through in terms of relating engagement to the rest of higher education. It's going to be a new kind of engagement. And I think we're going to get blended courses and all kinds of new models that will be exciting. And there's a push for a holistic response – that we don't just focus on practice in a narrow sense, but that it has to do with development. It has to do with not only freedom from, but freedom to develop and grow. And we've got to keep that vision that John Dewey particularly was so serious about pushing. And I think that there's a push for higher ed right now as it's trying to kind of legitimise itself and its costs, right? You know, the need to be more connective, to be innovative, right? And you're balancing that authentic connection with the purpose of higher ed and then the challenges that our institutions are facing in terms of revenue or even enrolment, right? Those challenges still exist for us.

John Saltmarsh: [One idea for the future] is community engagement as reparations work. I don't think it's really gotten traction in the field yet. It may, but I don't know. And I would just argue that if you approach community engagement from a reparations framework, you'd do it completely differently. And in all the ways that we, for decades, have been saying, this is what we really should be doing. One thing it looks like really different is that you spend a lot more time in what we think about as the preparation phase. The preparation phase is really like a deeply educational phase. You need to know the history of the community, of community harms, and the history around reparations. You need to understand the context for all of this before you ever go out into the community, including harm [in the] past and present, being done by your campus. Again, we've been saying for decades, we need to do much deeper preparation work. And this is not just preparation about knowing the community. This is like, know the deep history here before you step into the community. You have to find a different set of partners, and you need to approach the timeframe of the work in a completely different way. Community engagement becomes approached as a harm mitigation and repair project.

[For institutions], this is a really hard one, I think, because it essentially goes towards higher education being really different than what it is. It's not like taking higher education as it is and tweaking it. It has to be fundamentally different. So, at an institutional level, you would have to rethink, fundamentally rethink your relationship to the community. So, it's a big lift. I don't think it's impossible. I think about places like College Unbound where we actually have an example of an institution of higher education which is remaking what higher education is. Not tweaking it but really remaking it. And it's not a coincidence then that in College Unbound's strategic plan, a college that is centred on community, it talks about their work as reparations work. I don't know of any other strategic plan at a higher education institution that talks about reparations.

Amy Driscoll: I have a feeling that we probably need a lot more work on pedagogy that really involves community in our academic work, in our academic classes. Sometimes, it's kind of like a little activity on

the side and it misses all the possibilities that it could have. So, that's one place I would love to see more. The one area that always disappoints me, I'm being candid and people have heard this from me before, we're still not documenting well. When I say to campuses in the application, what have you learned about what's happening to students as a result of this? That they often just say, 'Oh, it's grown by 80 per cent,' or something like that. That's not my question. My question is what's happening to those students as a result of this work? Because I know it's happening. I know they know it's happening, but nobody's bothering to assess it, and measure it, and document it. And I think we need to for a lot of reasons. I'm always a little disappointed when I get to that part of the application because they usually talk about how it's grown, but that's not telling me what's happening to students. Same thing with faculty. Yeah, I'm glad you got more faculty, but what's happening to faculty? Is their scholarship changing? Are their courses changing as a result of this? And even the institution. Actually, people are better at the institutional level question about what's happening to the institution because it's in front of them and they see it, and they can talk about it. They're not necessarily documenting, measuring, but they are, they can talk about it. And they're starting to do more of that in community. So, it's the students and the faculty that we're not doing much with.

Final Words

Amy Driscoll: Reading some of those applications is a real education. Even now, when I read some of them [I] go, 'I never would've thought of that.' You know, like, which is wonderful. I want to think like that. I don't want them to be all old ideas that I've seen before. And they're not; people are doing so many exciting things – good things, good for students, good for community, good for the institution, all of that. Everybody kind of wins when these are done well. It was, for me, it was a privilege. I got to read all those first two times. And they were creative and they were doing things that nobody had ever thought about doing. It was just so exciting. I feel so privileged.

Tom Ehrlich: I would like to see preparation in the knowledge, skills and attributes of engaged citizenry integrated into the lifeblood of every college and university. Those institutions need to develop a deep commitment to help their students gain what they need to be engaged in communities – local, state, national, international – and to be leaders of those communities. The classification has an important role. I hope it will continue to grow and develop.

Matthew Hartley: I can't really think of a sound bite or a bumper sticker to leave you with, but I do think that it is going to be really important as this work continues to acknowledge the forces that are pushing in other directions and to pay attention to those and to figure out how do we position ourselves relative to those. Because it is possible, even for great things, like a framework like this, to be co-opted for ends that aren't consonant with what the original intent was. You could create a classification where you could look at lots of institutions where 10 000 flowers were blooming, but ultimately, there's no there there. That's a real danger. So, I think one of the challenges of this work has always been to cast a big enough tent to be able to draw lots of people in, but to also be clear that there are some people engaging in work in the community that is problematic. Some people are engaging in this work in a way that is highly technocratic, and quite frankly, anti-democratic. That's a reality, and that needs to be named, because there will be a temptation to sort of like draw as many people in as possible. And I think, at a certain point, there needs to be a willingness to say that there are certain basic principles that we stand for. And it doesn't mean you can't do whatever you want to do, but you're not doing this kind of work as we're defining it.

Eugene Rice: The odd thing that I've been fussing about all along is how the scholarship of engagement can be sustained, and that it doesn't become just an instrumental project. That we really do attend to those larger

questions and keep the connection to scholarship and the pressure on for that part of the university that I see being neglected now. I hope the service-learning process continues to get pushed. We need another Johnny Appleseed in this field. Ed Zlotkowski did such a great job spreading service learning, but we need a new generation pushing those issues, and faculty that are deeply committed to making those relationships and building it into the structure of the curriculum. We can't lose that.

If anything comes out of this interview, I hope it's the emphasis on the scholarship of engagement and the link between academic inquiry and community democratic engagement. I hope we can continue the work on the classification. We've been working at it all along. Those issues were always critical. I've been grateful for that.

John Saltmarsh: I've sat with the classification for some time now. Work on it requires a wide view of the community engagement movement in the United States, a sense of the landscape of the higher education sector nationally, and a long view, always thinking about the next cycle and the one after it. The future of the community engagement movement feels somewhat hopeful. The possibility for hope was enhanced following the reckoning this country and our campuses experienced in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Campuses capitalised on the popular demands of what was conceived of as the Third Period of Reconstruction. Anti-racism and equity quickly reshaped access, inclusion and diversity efforts. The community engagement movement, simmering in the wake of Tania Mitchell's pioneering work and other scholarship that followed it, was brought to a boil. Explicit and prominent work on anti-racist and equitable community engagement appeared on campuses, in scholarship and at conferences. It was embraced by national higher education associations encouraging community engagement. This was difficult but needed work. There were mistakes and missteps. There was scepticism of individual and institutional commitments. But the community engagement movement evidenced hope for helping higher educating institutions better fulfil their purpose of helping to create a multiracial democracy committed to equity. The community engagement classification captured the changes in the movement and pushed campuses towards equity-minded engagement. History tells us that there is always a backlash to racial equality. From the perspective of early 2023, where we are now, hope persists.

Where the classification feels precarious – not something new, but an ongoing concern – is in being co-opted by the prestige economy of higher education, and that it is sought, like a ranking, to market the value [of] the campus. Not unrelated is the issue of the administration of the community engagement classification. When administered by the Foundation, and then by NERCHE, and then by Brown University, there was a kind of shield of independence that allowed for careful adherence to standards without the pressures of being a membership organisation beholden to members. If the administrating body wavers on high standards because of member pressures, or if the Foundation, now under new leadership, wavers on core principles, then there is the possibility that the classification becomes watered down and largely meaningless. This is an ongoing concern that will require vigilance and commitment on the part of those leading the classification.

Lorilee Sandmann: As a wrap-up, I want to say this reflection has been an opportunity and a privilege. 'Knowledge with and in service to society' has been my lifelong commitment and quest. It's been quite an honour to be aligned with and part of the complex, dynamic and still-emerging field and transdisciplinary profession of higher education community engagement. It's been humbling to work with so many wonderful scholars, practitioners, students and leaders – both community and academic – worldwide who have dedicated themselves to building social innovations and making this world a better place. I found immense personal and professional satisfaction in being part of the building crew, constructing models and conceptualisations, exploring new materials in theory and practice, and laying a foundation for the next generation of engaged scholars and leaders. So, with individuals, higher-education institutions and

communities contributing adaptive renovations – through new and more inclusive ways of learning and working together – structures such as the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement hold promise of enduring, much like the structures my father built.

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