Literature Review

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Alexandra Winter, John Wiseman, and Bruce Muirhead (2006), “University–community engagement in Australia,” *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 1, 3, pp. 211–231

Engagement policies and practices of Australian universities emerge from three factors. First, these policies and practices stem in part from public policy shifts that demand alternative—nongovernmental—funding of higher education. Changing demographics in the student population, greater availability of educational opportunities driven by technology, and public demands for continuing education are a second set of factors that have affected engagement policies.

Finally, academic scholarship has emphasized the role of universities in educating citizens. The authors’ primary purpose is to describe the breadth of university–community engagement practices of Australian universities.

Methodology

Nine public universities in Victoria (the oldest founded in 1853) are the focus of the study. The majority of institutions are administered out of Melbourne with satellite campuses in other areas. Many of the institutions were originally founded for vocational training, adult education, nursing, or teaching training. These institutions either merged with existing universities or became universities in the late 1980s and 1990s.

The qualitative survey of institutions entailed two stages of inquiry. An examination of policy and institutional mission documentation was followed by interviews with internal and external stakeholders. The reports submitted by each institution were consolidated into the report “Beyond Rhetoric: University–Community Engagement in Victoria” (Winter *et al.*,

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2005). The report is available to view in its entirety at http://www.highered.vic.gov.au/news/australian_uni.asp.

Findings

Engagement was apparent at all nine institutions from the examination of mission statements and strategic plans. Forms of engagement that were strong across the variety of institution types were:

- Integration of engagement with teaching and learning through service learning, curricula designed to address specific local needs and through courses to teach civics and democracy.
- Applied research that spurs regional and local economic development and partnerships that facilitate technology transfer. Although these forms of engagement are encouraged by the Australian government, the current university system does not provide incentives or rewards for this type of research.
- Relationships with professions and businesses. Specific linkages are related to institutional history. Older institutions tended to have relationships with professions, while the former vocational schools form their relationships with businesses. These are critical for funding research and work-based curriculum.
- Institutions support social and cultural enrichment in their communities, including public lectures, cultural events, and providing facilities for community-sponsored events.
- Institutions partner with secondary schools to encourage college enrollment and provide bridging

programs to university study. In addition, institutions partner with other higher education institutions (nonuniversity) to share programming and facilities.

- Statements of commitment to improving local economic conditions are often included in institutional mission statements. However, strategies to accomplish these goals are seldom articulated.
- Internal participation and inclusion. Students and community members are represented in campus governing bodies. Community and industry representatives serve on academic advisory boards, including curriculum and program planning. Although these measures appear to be highly democratic, recent policy reforms have tended to make universities less collegial in form and have limited union activity.
- Articulations of “community.” Older institutions tend to be more global and conceptual in their definition. Small and formerly technical schools are more locally focused. Whatever the scope of the definition, “community” refers primarily to a place.

Implications for policy and practice

Successful engagement is contingent on institutional commitment to making it a core function. Government leadership in the form of funding, research support to examine the effect of engagement, and participation in partnership building are important to legitimizing community engagement in the academy.

The larger question of how university engagement in the

community affects Australia—particularly at the socio-economic level—is more complex. Universities have the knowledge resources to act as an effective engagement hub. Public policy that emerges from university–community partnerships might temper prevailing neo-liberal policies. However, engagement can rapidly shift into the market arena and become focused on harnessing financial resources for higher education that would no longer need to come from the state. In this scenario, outcomes such as “public good” tend to get lost. How local engagement could persist against neo-liberal policies is unclear.

Priorities for different forms of engagement are also unclear, further blurring an understanding of what the role of the university in society actually is. Specifically, what is “the relationship between community engagement and universities’ contributions to citizenship and social justice” (p. 223).

The paper concludes with an exploration of issues related to reconciling university engagement in the community and its role in the training of active citizens. It begins with a series of challenges about the social and political purposes of “community.” Is the purpose of a community to renew civil society and encourage democratic participation? Is “community” a means for government to manipulate public support for economic policy purposes or does devolution of government services to the non-governmental sector create a third sense of “community”?

A second challenge is defining the “citizen.” Historically, there has been a shift from the citizen focused on social change to the citizen entrepreneur. The

former relies on collective action while the entrepreneur relies on individual leadership.

Compared with American universities, Australian universities are not as values focused, despite the implementation of various engagement strategies. The focus on work-based learning and local engagement emphasizes the idea that the university’s main purpose is to train a workforce. Is educating the citizen even a true concern?

The local orientation of community engagement provides distinct local outcomes but seems parochial to some. The local community may, in fact, reinforce social exclusion rather than train students to an awareness of social justice issues. Community engagement at the local level may encourage an entirely different conception of civic participation than was envisioned by the university–community engagement movement.

Scott Sibrary (2006), “Counseling philanthropic donors,” *Ethics & Behavior*, 16, 3, pp. 183–197

The anticipated transfer of wealth over the next decade will create a population of donors in need of information and advice about philanthropy. What sources of information are available and who is qualified to give advice?

More specifically, Scott Sibrary asks what the proper role of legal and financial advisors is in the area of philanthropy. Is it even appropriate for these advisors to suggest and encourage philanthropic gifts? What are the professional responsibilities that accompany this type of consulting?

Donations are an investment in an organization or a cause. They often arise as an expression of a donor's values. The return on the donor's investment is "the extent to which the donation will lead to a satisfaction of the values used in selecting the donee" (p. 184). Prospective donors need qualified advisors because the information needed to make a gift may be difficult to find and more difficult to analyze.

What sources of information are available? Nonprofit organizations contact donors primarily through mail solicitation and their own fund raisers. As employees of the organizations they represent, fund raisers cannot act impartially on the donor's behalf. A donor cannot have an open and trusting relationship with the agent of another organization. Alternative information sources that Sibary suggests are recommendations by family and friends, volunteering, organizational web pages, and independent rating agencies such as the American Institute of Philanthropy and Guidestar. The rating agencies provide data that can be used to evaluate the operational effectiveness of a nonprofit organization. One limitation is that there is no level of agreement among the raters of what is important and/or evaluative. Data reported to the IRS (which many of these organizations use) may not be accurate. The amount and detail of available data can be daunting. Site visits to organizations might also be valuable, but would have to be limited to select organizations.

At the point when the amount of the potential gift is large enough that the donor is concerned about the organization's mission being a good

match with his or her values, hiring a consultant may be the best option. The confidence in giving that comes from having the advice of a competent counselor may result in a larger gift. The cost associated with hiring a consultant would be worth it—in part because donors would not have to rely on the advice of fund raisers. Unfortunately, those who could not afford professional advice would have to continue to rely on other sources.

The discussion of the consulting process focuses on *where* donations will go, since this is the area where the relationship between donor and advisor and the advisor's expertise most come into play. The impetus to make a gift must come from the donor. The advisor is there to help fulfill the donor's wishes, not to change his or her mind. The consultant acts as guide, helping the donor sort out the values that will guide the gift. Although this type of work is not ordinarily done by financial planners or legal counsel, they are often asked to provide advice about philanthropy. They are often not in a position to do a qualitative evaluation of a potential organization or be able to get access to detailed financial information. However, financial planners and legal advisors are often asked to provide this advice.

When an advisor enters into such an arrangement with a donor, he or she may be held to the standards and obligations of his or her profession if that is the primary role on which the relationship with the donor is based. Sibary specifically describes the fiduciary relationship, where the consultant acts as the donor's agent. An agent takes on special responsibilities even if he or she is not compensated

or is acting as an independent contractor. Fiduciaries must exercise care, loyalty, and “obedience to the instructions, express or implied, of the principal” (p. 190). Implied here are accountability, disclosure of information, confidentiality, and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

The two examples given are estate planners and certified financial planners. When is a philanthropic consultant an agent of the donor? If the donor asks the consultant to arrange gifts on his or her behalf, the consultant is an agent; simply providing information is not agency. Sibary contends that in the gray area where the consultant is helping determine the direction of the gift through analysis and gathering private information from the donor, he or she is also an agent. The responsibilities and duties incumbent on these advisors is one reason why many do not provide advice to their clients about philanthropy.

Philanthropy may clearly be in a client’s best interests, but a professional advisor may not consider it ethical to encourage a client who shows little or no interest in making a gift. The author suggests that it would be better for the advisor to risk pushing a frank discussion of philanthropic giving and how it can be used to further the client’s values rather than being too cautious.

Sibary concludes that there will be an ongoing need for more consultants for philanthropic donors. It is not likely that estate planners or financial planners will soon grow comfortable or skilled in this role. He suggests adding specialists in philanthropy within firms or networking with firms that have expertise in philanthropy.

Angela M. Eikenberry (2006), “Giving circles: Growing grassroots philanthropy,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 35, 3, pp. 517–532

Giving circles represent a new type of philanthropy that is characterized by higher levels of donor engagement and an emphasis on small and grassroots organizations. The number of giving circles that exist in the United States is unknown—the author has identified more than 225 in the course of her research—and research on this funding strategy is meager. Angela Eikenberry’s purpose is to provide a description of giving circles, how they differ from other philanthropic mechanisms, and how they are likely to affect the nonprofit world.

Research design

Because of the lack of research in this area, Eikenberry chose a qualitative design for her comparative study. From a database developed by the author, purposive samples of giving circle leaders and participants as well as professionals who assist giving circle groups were drawn. Data were gathered using personal interviews, telephone interviews, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using an interactive process of reading, coding, and categorizing. MAXqda software was used to facilitate coding and analysis.

Findings and analysis

Benchmark statistics:

- 225 giving circles are operating in 37 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada.

- Geographically, giving circles cluster in the Northeast, upper Midwest, and West Coast.
- \$32 million has been donated.
- 8,000 people participate.
- Most giving circles are less than five years old.

Eikenberry identified three major types of giving circles—small groups, loose networks, and formal organizations. “Small groups” are characterized by small numbers of participants and small monetary contributions (\$50–\$5,000). Members are involved in all aspects of the donation process, including leadership. Loose networks are completely voluntary in membership (no paid staff), with no set fees or minimum contributions. A core of leaders organizes events and makes grant decisions on behalf of their casually affiliated participants. Grants often go to individuals in need or those helping the needy. Formal organizations most closely resemble traditional membership organizations, having a governing board, a committee structure, and paid staff. The cost to participate is higher—\$5,000–\$5,500. Grant decisions are committee driven. The four subtypes of formal organizations are Young Leader funds, Affiliated funds, Independent 501 © 3 organizations, and Social Venture Partners (SVPs). The SVPs—the only subtype discussed—are organized along the venture philanthropy model. The members become educated about philanthropy, are heavily engaged with grant recipients, and typically volunteer in their recipient organizations at the administrative level.

Impact of giving circles on philanthropy

Giving circles attract a new group of donors—women and people under the age of 40—as well as facilitate new giving behaviors. Participants who have previously been active donors often increase their level of giving and find new areas of interest. Giving becomes more focused with fewer but larger gifts being made. The focus on engagement through site visits, volunteering, presentations, and informal gatherings also gives giving circle participants opportunities to develop relationships with nonprofit professionals that are more characteristic of major donors.

Diversity is not a hallmark of giving circles. Participants are primarily Caucasian professionals from the upper middle class. Only a small group of minority and other ethnic groups are represented. Within circles, the members tend to be homogeneous in ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Funding goes primarily to individuals and groups that resemble the giving circle membership—women, girls, youth, and children.

Unique characteristics of giving circles

All giving circles have six common traits. They

- pool funds,
- make donations (cash, in kind, and time),
- educate their members about philanthropy and community needs,
- provide social interaction for their members at a range of levels,
- bring members into volunteer roles,
- remain independent from charities.

The combination of all six factors is what is unique. The specific purpose of existing to give away money is also unique. The level of engagement is also new to this generation, whose main contact with philanthropy has been through the writing of checks. Giving circles are also part of the “experience economy.” Participants want more than being pampered donors.

Three other factors set giving circles apart. First, the amount of money needed to participate is far less than what is needed to start a foundation. Second, participants seek out groups and individuals to fund rather than waiting for proposals to come in. Finally, educating participants about philanthropy is an integral part of the giving circle.

Participants cite a variety of reasons for joining a giving circle. Some participants want personal engagement in giving and direct involvement with recipient organizations. This is tempered by others who see giving circles as an opportunity to get involved at a level they are comfortable with and to have a safe and anonymous vehicle for giving. Another reason for joining is to have the educational and social opportunities provided by giving circles. Finally, the power of combined giving offers the sense of being involved in something bigger and being able to achieve more for the community than can be accomplished individually.

Conclusions

Although Eikenberry could not predict the effect that giving circles might ultimately have on nonprofit organizations, she commented on the

relationship between nonprofit professionals and giving circle participants. Although professionals may not have much influence when it comes to how and where giving circles are created, those who are promoting giving circles need to understand the different types. Professionals should be encouraged by the capacity for increased giving and new donors that giving circles can generate but should also realize that more focused giving might not be a benefit for all nonprofit organizations. Professionals should be prepared to assist giving circle participants when called upon and may need to shift from the strategy of seeking donors to helping donors find their organization.

Adrian Sargeant, Walter Wymer, and Toni Hilton (2006), “Marketing bequest club membership: An exploratory study of legacy pledgers,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 35, 3, pp. 384–404

At 9 per cent of total giving, bequest giving is significant. Why do fund raisers not pursue bequests more vigorously, when 90 per cent of Americans make contributions during their lives? Is bequest giving not higher because people are not asked? Are fund raisers too uncomfortable with asking for gifts at the time of death or are they uninformed due to the lack of research in this area? To begin to answer these questions, the authors conducted a study of bequests made through wills. The purpose of this empirical study of 624 donors was to determine the motivations for making a bequest.

Methodology

Because of the lack of relevant research, Sargeant, Wymer, and Hilton designed a three-step exploratory study. Focus groups were held to discover a range of possible motivations for making a bequest. In the second step a scale was developed to measure the motivations discovered in the focus groups interviews. Finally, a mail survey was used to develop a profile of donors who make bequests in comparison to donors who do not.

Eight focus group sessions were held with donors who had made bequests through a will. Three types of factors emerged regarding how the decision to make a bequest differed from making a gift during life. Organizational factors included

- performance (how effective the organization was),
- professionalism (recognition of how important this gift was to the donor), and
- communication (were donors kept informed about how their gifts are being used).

Individual factors of significance were

- reciprocation—prior relationships the donor has had with the cause,
- empathy—how strongly the bequest maker identified with those who benefit from the organization, and
- negative state relief—the gift alleviated bad feelings and helped the donor feel better about himself or herself.

Legacy specific motives included

- family need—family and close friends have been taken care of,

- tax planning—the relative importance of tax savings as a motive for making a bequest, and
- need to live on—the psychological need to establish a personal legacy for oneself or for family.

A five-point numeric bipolar scale was developed to test the nine hypotheses representing each of the factors. The scale was tested using a sample survey. Item analysis was done on the results using a variety of tests. The final survey of 30 items was sent to 3,000 donors to three large US nonprofit organizations. Of the donors, 1,500 had made a bequest through a will and 1,500 had not but had received a solicitation for a bequest in the last month. The usable response rate was 23.5 per cent.

Results

Based on demographic evidence, it would be difficult to distinguish good prospects from poor bequest prospects. Organizations should solicit bequests across their donor file without segmentation, except perhaps for age. Bequest givers are more likely to be female and living alone and are less likely to have children. The study found no significant differences in income, education, or age. Younger donors could be encouraged to write a will that includes a bequest, while older prospects could be encouraged to amend a will to add a bequest.

Of the nine motivational factors that were tested, the ones that were significantly more important for bequest donors were

- performance — how effective the organization was

- communication — were donors kept informed about how their gifts are being used
- reciprocation—prior relationships the donor has had with the cause
- family need—family and close friends have been taken care of
- tax planning—the relative importance of tax savings as a motive for making a bequest
- need to live on—the psychological need to establish a personal legacy for oneself or for family.

The lack of family need was the most distinct difference between bequest donors and non-bequest donor groups. The tax effect was the opposite of what was anticipated. Although tax savings may have been a significant factor at the outset of the gift decision, its importance faded compared to selecting a recipient organization. The legacy factor should encourage nonprofit organizations to develop recognition opportunities for these donors.

Conclusions

Overall the authors conclude that donors who make bequests through a will are driven by significantly different motivations than donors who do not. However, because these donors are not easily identified by demographic characteristics, donor databases should not be segmented for solicitation of bequests.

The authors caution that the results are limited to the organizations that were studied and are specific for bequests through wills. They may not apply to other types of planned gifts.

Richard A. Sundeen, Sally A. Raskoff, and M. Cristina Garcia (2007), "Differences in perceived barriers to volunteering to formal organizations," *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* 17, 3, pp. 279–300

Although 28 per cent of the US population volunteered in 2001, we know little about why the other 72 per cent of Americans did not. We also do not know how socio-demographic roles and other factors relate to the barriers that keep people from volunteering.

Because of the importance of volunteer labor in the nonprofit sector, it is important to know who does not volunteer, why they do not volunteer, and if there are similarities between groups that do not volunteer for a particular reason. This study looks at the differences between those who do and do not volunteer, the reasons why people do not volunteer in formal organizations, and how these barriers relate both to each other and to factors such as ethnicity, race, immigration status, and other socioeconomic factors.

Sundeen, Raskoff, and Garcia hypothesized that in order to volunteer, a person must have adequate personal resources (time, money, social connections, etc), must feel that there is a good match between the skills he or she has to offer and the needs of the organization, the desire to volunteer, information about volunteer opportunities, and an organization that is interested in having him or her volunteer. If any of these things is missing, a barrier to volunteering exists.

Methodology

Data for analysis came from the survey of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, supplement to the September 2002 Current Population Survey. The survey queried household members aged 16 or older about volunteering. The population size was 71,312 individuals and included only persons who volunteered in a formal organization.

Demographic data collected included age, gender, race/ethnicity, citizenship status, income, educational attainment, employment status, home ownership, marital status, number of children, and size of city of residence.

Those who did not volunteer were asked which of nine factors would encourage them to volunteer: “time, health, child care, transportation, paid expenses, interest, information, the availability of an employer volunteer program, and skills–activity match” (p. 287).

Results and conclusions

The most often cited barriers to volunteering were lack of time, lack of interest, and health issues. Other factors previously considered to be barriers accounted for a very small percentage of people who do not volunteer.

The groups that cite lack of time or lack of interest are distinctly different. The “lack of time” group were characterized as Caucasian, female,

high income, high educational attainment, and employed. This group tended to have more children in the household and lived in small urban areas. The “lack of interest” group was characterized as male, predominantly ethnic and racial minorities, non-citizens, were of lower income and educational attainment, and were more likely to be unemployed. They had fewer children at home and were renters in large cities. More research is needed to understand this particular group. It is not clear if the lack of interest is in volunteering for formal organizations only or also pertains to informal volunteering. The survey also did not measure whether individuals in this group have had negative, exclusionary experiences with volunteering.

Volunteer recruiters need to take these barriers into account but face challenges about what factors they can actually control. The three found to be most important—lack of time, lack of interest, and health issues—are the most difficult for organizations to have any impact on. In addition, the issue of social exclusion must be addressed by further examining who is asked to volunteer and how they are asked.

Reference

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