

## Literature review of practices in community-university engaged learning partnerships

*April 2015, a report by Lacey Gaechter, University of Wyoming*

This document is a summary of my findings regarding current standards that academic institutions use in community partnerships, presented in hopes of elucidating best practices for the University of Wyoming to engage community partners in the most equitable fashion. In addition to outlining current practices and making recommendations for best practices when they seemed to emerge, I have also noted perceived inherent, non-monetary benefits to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) when those have been identified.

### **Guest Lecturers/ Instructors**

Based on my research, it seems unusual for universities in the United States to have an established, publicly available policy on paying community members to act as guest lecturers or instructors. The United Kingdom's University of Kent (Kent), however, has made its policy on hourly instructors accessible at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/salary/hourly-lecturers.html>. When compensating hourly instructors, Kent pays for preparation and other tasks outside of classroom time such as grading. The university even adds 16.48% to hourly wages in order to pro rate hourly employees for missed holiday pay and other benefits their salaried colleagues receive. Total hourly rates range from £16.77 to £38.24 (\$18.40-\$41.37<sup>1</sup>), based on the guest lecturer's level of responsibility in the course and "spinal point," which I assume relates to his or her perceived level of expertise (University of Kent, 2014).

I did find some less official examples of guest instructor/ lecturer arrangements in the United States. A personal friend of mine had the experience of teaching a course for De Anza College in Cupertino, CA. He is a successful solar energy engineer and taught a semester long course on that topic. When we corresponded for purposes of this paper, he could not remember how much he was paid for his teaching, but did recall that, "it wasn't a lot" and was in the form of a stipend. My friend offered some insight into the benefits he perceived as being imbedded in guest instructing when he told me, "I just did it for the experience, to promote myself as a solar expert, and to promote the technology in general" (Anonymous, 2015). He was also relieved when the semester was over, and did not want to return as a guest instructor (Anonymous, 2015).

A variety of information emerged from an informal conversation on the website Ask MetaFilter. An anonymous poster asked for guidance on how much money to request from a professor who had asked the poster to give three guest lectures. Some people suggest asking for the guest lecturer's hourly rate in her or his regular employment. Some suggest that he or she could offer a discount off of that rate for any perceived imbedded benefits such as resume

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<sup>1</sup> US dollar values determined by using a Google conversion application, <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=38.24+euros+converted+to+us+dollars> on April 17, 2015.

building and exposure. One respondent works for a university and notes “we do pay a few desirable guest lecturers at crazy rates, others we are able to get to go along with our 'standard rate' for guest lecturers.” According to this conversation, several universities and/ or departments do offer standard rates (\$100-\$1500 for a single lecture), although they are often negotiable (Ask MetaFilter, 2011).

### *Community Consultants*

Although not directly applicable to compensating guest instructors, researchers at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill developed useful standards in creating a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) project with community members. For their help on this work, the university paid lead employees of CBOs as independent contractors at \$50 per hour. They were also paid for mileage and preparation time (not for travel time) and received a \$1,000 donation each for their organizations. The CBPR team notes that, “Underpinning equity in research relations is equitable compensation for all members of the research team, not only those on the academic side” (Black et al., 2013). They also concluded that community partners benefited not only from payments but also from clout via involvement in a publishable process, networking, outreach, and professional development (Black et al., 2013).

### *Considerations*

Based on my research, some key considerations emerged when determining best practices for compensating community members for guest lectures and instruction:

- Will the guest instructor be paid hourly or in a lump sum?
- If paid hourly, will instructor be paid for travel, preparation, and other time?
- Will the guest instructor be paid for travel/ mileage and related expenses (e.g. lodging and meals)?
- Should the university determine a set rate, or should it pay guest lecturers based on wages in the community member’s normal employment?
- Getting paid as an independent contractor may be the best option for a guest instructor, but it may also require inappropriate paperwork and tax filing (Black et al., 2013). Should an option exist for the academic institution to make a donation or direct payment to the guest instructor’s CBO instead?

### **Hosting an Internship**

Internship programs were common at academic institutions that I researched, and several schools require internships as part of their curricula. Some institutions promote the benefits that hosting organizations/ companies receive including assurances of reliable, talented interns, thanks to the rigor of that college or university (Bennington College, n.d.). Student interns either pay to work (if paying tuition for a for-credit internship), work for free, receive some payment from their host organization, or receive payment from their institution. I found examples of this last option at Berea College and Tufts University (Berea College, n.d., Tufts University, 2015). I did not find any other explicit or monetary benefits to internship hosting organizations provided by academic institutions.

### **Student Volunteer/ Service Projects**

Despite web searches, email messages, and phone calls, I found no standards among universities in regards to compensating CBOs for their partnership in student volunteer projects. I have had personal experience collaborating with Colorado State University's (CSU's) Alternative Spring Break program from the nonprofit Trees, Water & People (TWP) where I was employed. I negotiated a \$2,500 donation for TWP from the CSU students to pay for my time in planning and attending the trip with them. It is worth noting that, from my perspective, the benefit of this trip was primarily received by the students, who approached me with their offer/request to work with my company. TWP was in no particular need of their volunteer service, and a large part of my preparation time was spent organizing cultural activities for the group.

I found one study that attempted to understand service-learning "from the community's perspective" (Geller et al., 2014). Geller et al. report that CBOs derive three benefits from such partnerships with schools (in this case, elementary schools): 1) An increase or improvement in how the organization fulfills its mission statement 2) Influencing youth to the benefit of their cause 3) Garnering new supporters and an increased resource base. The authors describe a case study in which more than 800 New York City schools each chose one organization to support with a \$1,000 donation. The selected CBOs then decided whether or not to request further involvement from schools via a service-learning project (1/3 did). Geller et al. present theories of the two most important factors determining whether a CBO will report benefits from a school partnership. First, the larger the size of the organization, the more likely it is to feel such an experience is valuable. Perhaps even more important, however, is that CBOs that believe in the benefits of service-learning are more likely to reap them (Geller et al., 2014).

### *Considerations*

Based on my research and personal experience, I suggest that it would be worth developing a grant/ award application for CBOs interested in working with students for a service or volunteer project. The grant request would include service hours required and any other funding or resources that might be needed to complete the CBO's target project. Two goals would be accomplished via this process:

1. By requiring organizations to complete an application, the university will be more likely to engage with CBOs that are invested in a partnership, which increases the likelihood of the CBOs benefiting (Geller et al., 2014).
2. By allowing CBOs to define all the resources that they will need for a project, the university empowers these organizations to define their own benefits from collaboration.

As university funding and resources are limited, admittedly CBOs with smaller requests will be more likely to receive a grant/ award. While this may be a detriment to the system, the application litmus test will also increase the likelihood of satisfied community partners. It is also likely that the university will be able to offer resources at no or little cost to itself (e.g. meeting space, office space, or tech support) that would not otherwise be available to CBOs.

### **Conclusion**

The University of Wyoming has the opportunity to be at the forefront of establishing best practices for community partnerships. Currently there is a significant range in procedures/

negotiations when it comes to hiring guest lecturers. Some institutions pay their students for internships with CBOs. When it comes to service-learning or volunteer projects, there are at least some examples of institutions providing financial support as well as volunteer hours to their community partner. Non-monetary benefits reported by CBOs that partner with universities include promotion, outreach, prestige, meeting programming goals, free or inexpensive labor, spreading a cause, and expanding resources and supporters. In creating best practices for the University of Wyoming, the ethos espoused by Black et al. in *Beyond incentives for involvement to compensation for consultants: increasing equity in CBPR approaches* may be useful as a type of peer-reviewed values guide for equitable partnerships.

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