Measuring Scholarly Outreach at Michigan State University

Tools, Challenges, and Faculty Perceptions

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ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE • TRANSFORMING LIVES
Outreach is a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions.
Reason for Measurement

- Planning Data
- Public Story
- Cross-Institutional Comparisons
Developmental Process

• Evaluating Quality Outreach
  • Points of Distinction
  • Reappointment, Promotion, & Tenure
• Counting Outreach—Measuring Outreach Quantitatively
  • Project-based Pilots
  • Interview Protocol
  • Faculty-based Format
Online Survey Questions

- Total Time Spent on Outreach
- Indicate Area(s) of Concern
  - Arts & Humanities
  - Business & Industrial Management
  - Children, Youth, and Families (non-school related)
  - Civic Responsibility & Leadership
  - Community & Economic Development
  - Education, Pre-Kindergarten – 12
  - Food and Fiber Production & Safety
  - Health & Health Care
  - Labor Relations, Training, & Safety
  - Natural Resources, Land Use, & Environment
  - Public Safety & Corrections
  - Technology Transfer & Diffusion
Online Survey Questions (continued)

- Identify Form of Outreach Work
  - Outreach Research
  - Outreach Instruction
  - Student Experiential/Service Learning
  - Public Events & Information
  - Clinical Service

- Kinds and Number of Participants

- Location

- Revenues
Online Survey Questions (continued)

- Actions for Whom, about What
- Collaborators/Co-sponsors
  - External
  - Internal
- Kind/Number of Personnel
- Outcomes, Evaluation
- Plan for Sustaining the Work
Interview Protocol

- Need for the project, issue addressed
- Expertise drawn on
- Approach, strategy, methodology
- Effect on community, public policy, practice
- Documentation
- Sustainability
- Value added of university involvement
Interview Protocol (continued)

- Scholarly impact—on research and teaching, on role as academic
- Communication and products/publications
- Impact of outreach work on faculty scholarship
- Impact of faculty outreach work on the broader community
- Implications for outreach research
Challenges and Tensions

- Vocabulary
- Whose Activity Is Reported
- “Resource Consciousness”
- Using Technology
Vocabulary

- Developing a Vocabulary to Describe Outreach/Engagement that...
  - distinguishes scholarship based outreach from “service” in general
  - is well understood by faculty
  - allows us to classify different forms of outreach
  - has meaning to the general public
  - supports comparisons across institutions
Whose Activity Is Reported?

- Who counts as having scholarly expertise?
  - Range of faculty and academic appointments
  - External partners
  - Different priorities and perspectives
  - New kind of scholarly process and product
“Resource Consciousness”

- Developing Greater “Resource Consciousness” Among Those Involved in Outreach
  - Toward making outreach a planned activity
  - Overcoming conflict between “counting the cost” and “doing good”
  - Finding ways to value external partnerships
Using Technology

- Web Usability & Accessibility
- Security v. Timing Out
- Prompting Use in a Paperless, 24/7 Environment
Reporting Out—Next Steps

- To the provost, deans, chairs, directors for planning
- To the public, by thematic areas, for university involvement
- Across institutions—developing common data sets
Contact Us

For more information about Measuring Scholarly Outreach at Michigan State University, please contact:

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