



RETHINKING UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY
POLICY CONNECTIONS

University-Community Relations in the UK

Engaging Universities

Carolyn Kagan · John Diamond

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Rethinking University–Community Policy Connections

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Rethinking University–Community Policy Connections will publish works by scholars, practitioners, and ‘prac-ademics’ across a range of countries to explore substantive policy or management issues in the bringing together of higher education institutions and community-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations, governments, and businesses. Such partnerships afford unique opportunities to transform practice, develop innovation, incubate entrepreneurship, strengthen communities, and transform lives. Yet such potential is often not realized due to bureaucratic, cultural, or legal barriers erected between higher education institutions and the wider community. The global experience is common, though the precise mechanisms that prevent university-community collaboration or that enable successful and sustainable partnership vary within and across countries. Books in the series will facilitate dialogue across country experiences, help identify cross-cutting best practices, and to enhance the theory of university-community relations.

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PREFACE

We have both been working in the field of university–community engagement, in our teaching, research and other activities coming under the umbrella of academic enterprise or knowledge exchange for a combined period of nearly 80 years! Thus we are not impartial commentators when thinking and writing about community engagement in the UK. We have experience of, and know about policy in England more than in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, so we have concentrated mostly on England. Some policies are shared, others are slightly different. We have worked in different HEIs and with different roles so this book combines our two standpoints. CK worked for 38 years in what was Manchester Polytechnic and became Manchester Metropolitan University in 1992. Her roles were variously lecturer, Acting Head of Department, Research Institute Director. In a forward thinking School of Psychology, in 1982 she had the Departmental role of ‘Community Links Co-ordinator’. In this role she was one of the founders of the *Research Exchange*, the first dedicated portal for community groups into a HEI in the UK. Her community engaged work embraced knowledge exchange, teaching and learning, and research. She now works with community organisations, struggling to work meaningfully with universities. JD has worked in adult and continuing education since 1978 and at Edge Hill University since 1990. He has a number of very different roles including being the founding director of the University’s Institute for Public Policy and Professional Practice (2013–2018) and is now the Associate Dean for Knowledge Exchange and Innovation in the Faculty

of Education. He was chair of the national charity—ARVAC (Association for Research with the Voluntary Sector) which itself grew out of a decision by a number of researchers and voluntary sector activists to establish (in 1978) an organisation which would promote university–community links. All of his work has sought to narrow the distance between the university and the communities within which higher education institutions sit (geographically) as well as opening them up as resources to be used and accessed by activists, residents and community organisations. He was involved in working on one of the early Access to Higher Education programmes established outside London and experienced both the willingness of HEIs to open their doors and the desire of some to maintain distance from being open and flexible about their approach.

We do not attempt to be comprehensive in our coverage, nor to address every single piece of relevant policy. Rather, we are focusing mainly on the period of the mid 1990s and beyond, which saw rapid and continual changes in Higher Education policy and practice: along with other countries in the core capitalist countries, the period of the massification and marketisation of HE. We have reached a point where in England over 50% of school leavers now enter HE, mostly paying £9000 pa to study and with student loans accruing at approximately 61%, leaving with substantial debts. Access is still uneven across social groups.

We are not consistent with our sources—drawing on the most relevant for the particular issue under discussion. Government Documents, commentaries, and policy implementation guidelines all appear, including legislation, the endless reviews and reports commissioned by successive Governments and guidance from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The policy streams we have traced are those that have affected our working lives and those of our students.

We have organised the book by presenting the mosaic of policies affecting teaching learning and student experience; third stream and research (the three ‘core missions’ of the majority of HEIs). This mosaic is constantly changing, being enlarged or reduced, linking with various—and varying—Government departments and with changes in emphasis across successive Governments. During the course of writing the book (and almost certainly between delivering the manuscript and its publication) the entire corpus of bodies responsible for universities has changed—we refer throughout to bodies that no longer exist, although their archives are usually good. This has made it difficult for us, but without a doubt it will also have made it difficult for those charged

with implementing and developing policies and practices within universities. There are many fantastic examples of community-engaged practice that go on across disciplines in universities, and community partners who have persevered and thereby influenced academic practices and policies—we regret that we have not been able to include examples of them all, but have tried to show the diversity within the sector. It is a wonder that any good community-university work is carried out—but it is, and we applaud those still managing to work in creative and principled ways to the benefit of both communities and universities.

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There are many people with whom I have worked, both inside and outside the university who have made it possible to do community-engaged work, and I thank them all. Marilyn Wedgewood worked tirelessly to bring *community* into Third Stream activities. Sam Gray, Research Impact Manager at Manchester Metropolitan University, read some drafts, and supported and encouraged the writing of the book, and who really does ‘get’ the agenda. Angela Stewart whose courage and fortitude constantly reminded me of why engaging with communities is so important, and who was a fantastic community ‘partner’ for a long time. My daughters, Amy and Anna, who, as teenagers, understood and accepted the fragility of work-home boundaries in community engaged work. Mark Burton with whom I have worked on some action research projects, and on many other things, embodies reciprocity, mutuality and collaboration in both our professional and private lives.

Carolyn Kagan

I have had the opportunity to learn from many people who know more about community/university relationships than I do and I would like to thank especially Anne Kearney and Andy Nelson for their insights and friendship. And my thanks to Linda Rush for her thinking on how important understanding the potential of strong connections based on collaboration and mutuality are in introducing new ways of thinking and working across boundaries. Working across boundaries has involved a really rich relationship with Christine Flynn and Garth Britton who have been co-conveners with me of The Practice Panel—part of the International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM) and I have learnt so much both from our conversations as well as the panel discussions over the years.

John Diamond

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ABBREVIATIONS

AASCU	American Association of State Colleges and Universities
ACF	Active Community Fund
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AUT	Association of University Teachers
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CASE	Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering
CDP	Community Development Projects
CERI	Centre for Educational Research and Innovation
CETL	Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
CLES	Centre for Local Economic Strategies
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DES	Department for Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance
EPSRC	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GUNi	Global University Network for Innovation
HC	House of Commons
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Award

HEBCIS/HE-BCI	Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEIF	Higher Education Innovation Fund
HEROBIC	Higher Education Reach Out to Business and the Community
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
ISI	Institute for Scientific Information
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
KEF	Knowledge Exchange Framework
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KTP	Knowledge Transfer Partnership
MOOC	Massive Online Open Course
MRC	Medical Research Council
NCCPE	National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHS	National Health Service
NIHR	National Institute for Health research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
OfS	Office for Students
PASCAL	International Observatory for Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions
PE	Public Engagement
PER	Public Engagement in Research
POLAR	Participation of Local Areas
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
R and D	Research and Development
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RCUK	Research Councils UK
RDF	Research Development Framework of Vitae
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RQF	Research Quality Framework (Australia)
SCC	Social, Community and Cultural component of HEBCIS
SENDA	Special Education Needs and Disability Act
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework

THELMA	Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award
U3A	University of the Third Age
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation
UR-MAD	Urban Regeneration—Making a Difference
UUK	Universities UK
WP	Widening Participation

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Foundations of University–Community Engagement

Abstract This chapter establishes the foundation for university–community engagement by examining the contested nature of community, and the ways in which universities have developed over time. The discussion goes on to consider the characteristics and principles of engagement and engaged scholarship and the importance of place, in order to end with the question of why engage? The roles of reciprocity and mutuality are argued to be core principles of engagement, which is seen more as an organising process for university activity, rather than a set of discrete activities.

Keywords University–community engagement · Community · University · Historical context · Characteristics of engagement · Principles of engagement · Engaged scholarship · Reciprocity

It is clear to us that university–community engagement is complex, and potentially covers all university functions and activities. We will consider how policy has supported or obstructed principles community engagement through the lenses of teaching, learning and the student experience; third stream activities; and research. But first, we will explore what it means to talk of community engagement, communities and universities.

To begin to talk of university–community partnerships is to delve into the messiness of the nature and function of the university and how this has

changed over time and in relation to different policy initiatives, whilst at the same time to expose the different ways in which ‘community engagement’ has been and can be conceptualised, supported or exploited. In this chapter we look at how universities can be differentiated in terms of their **approach** to community engagement and the different focus of engaged activities.

Community engagement is a term that is immediately both familiar and alien to universities. It is familiar because in the UK, Universities have always been in and of their communities. It is alien because, until fairly recently, engagement of any kind, far less of communities, has not featured as part of the core work of universities. Community engagement is most usually considered part of the *Third Mission* of universities—after teaching and research. It is variously referred to as (community) outreach, knowledge exchange (previously knowledge transfer), or (part of) public engagement. However, as we shall see, community engagement is as relevant to teaching and learning and to research as it is to third stream activities. Indeed, there is a view that community engagement should not sit alongside teaching and research, but should permeate all university activities: a shift from just one university function to the Engaged University.

We will consider the messiness and complexity of university–community engagement by looking at the nature of community as it might be applied to engagement with and by universities; the emergence of different kinds of universities with different emphases on engagement; and the nature of engaged activities that address different kinds of communities in different kinds of ways. But first, we need to consider what we mean by communities.

WHAT IS THE ‘COMMUNITY’ IN UNIVERSITY–COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

At its simplest, ‘community’ in the context of university–community engagement is any body or grouping that is external to the university. However, in terms of university engagement, throughout the last 50 years, the emphasis has been on universities engaging with business and other agencies, usually at a regional level (see, for example, Goddard and Puukka 2008), with a focus on their role in wealth creation and economic development. For our purposes, we are defining community in diverse but more specific ways. Community, here, refers to all those

bodies external to the university with an interest in **social** (rather than economic) development. This is a difficult distinction to maintain, as much of policy is framed in economic terms with social development very much subsidiary. Place is an important way of thinking about community, and community engagement certainly includes the ways in which universities relate to their hinterlands, to their localities—to citizens, local authorities, public services, local businesses and the community and voluntary sector. A university's locality is at one and the same time a neighbourhood, a town or city, a region, and may in some circumstances include even wider geographical spaces. However, community goes beyond place and we include communities of identity (such as age, race, gender, sense of place), or of interest, where people are brought together through common experiences or shared values which underpin their actions. Communities of faith, of kin or of profession, as well as communities of opportunity (people connected to each other through a common experience such, for example, of a natural disaster, forced migration or health condition). Any university, at any one point in time, is embedded in, attached and connected to diverse communities and engagement can take different forms at institutional, faculty, departmental, course or staff and student individual levels. Most importantly, when we talk of community engagement we are cognisant of the roles that universities can and should play in addressing pressing social problems (Hooper 2016), and attention has to be paid to engagement with marginalised and excluded communities (Benneworth 2013; Conway et al. 2009; Kagan and Burton 2010) and to the role that universities can play in both understanding and contributing to greater social inclusion and equality through engagement. However community is understood, we must be aware of the dangers of assuming an entity that is united, homogenous and cohesive, rather than one in which the diverse differences and conflicts within and between groups play out in a myriad of ways.

WHAT IS A UNIVERSITY?

The HE system, too, is diverse and complex. We use the term university, or Higher Education Institution (HEI) to include all post-secondary higher education providers. Whilst universities may share a core purpose, there are differences in ethos and remit, which Howells et al. (2008) argue should be understood and encouraged. Denham (2005:

19) attempted to provide a definition of university, applicable to many different social, political, economic and religious contexts.

“A university is a complex higher education organisation that is formally authorised to offer and confer advanced degrees in three or more academic disciplines or fields of study.”

It is worth noting there is no mention here of research or any activities beyond the conferment of degrees. In addition, as we shall see, some institutions that are able to offer degrees are not, strictly universities. Watson, Hollister, Stroud and Babcock (2011: 15) take a different tack, suggesting that: “at its heart, the university is a reservoir of intellectual capital: its most fundamental purpose is about the creation, testing and application of knowledge”.

Collini (2012: 8) goes further to suggest four characteristics of the modern university:

1. Provides post-secondary education beyond the training of professionals
2. Furthers advanced scholarship or research which is not dictated by the need to solve immediate practical problems
3. These activities are pursued in a number of different disciplines or clusters of disciplines
4. Enjoys institutional autonomy as far as its intellectual activities are concerned. matters are concerned

Collini notes that as they have evolved over time, universities are one of the most enduring institutions, and have consistently been accorded large amounts of social trust. These characteristics probably underpin the recent debates on what is the point, value and public good of universities (Collini 2012). Clearly the teaching and research functions of universities are here but little mention is made of ‘third leg’ ‘outreach’ third mission’, ‘third stream’ ‘academic enterprise’ or knowledge transfer or exchange, all of which support knowledge-based interactions between HEIs and organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors, and wider society. Furthermore, it is these activities that enable universities to contribute to solving immediate practical problems—a purpose we add to Collini’s list.

Between these definitions of the university lie a host of diverse practices. How best can we understand the differences or ‘types’ of university? There have been several attempts at typologies of universities. Perhaps the best place to start is in the ways that universities themselves cluster themselves.

University Groupings

Universities have grouped themselves in three ways. Firstly groupings around advocacy and representation as a body. These groupings include *Universities UK* which represents 135 universities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; *Universities Scotland* which draws together the common interests of 19 HEIs in Scotland; and *Guild HE* which represents some of the newer universities and specialist colleges (such as those for art, drama, music, law, osteopathy and agriculture).

Secondly, grouping around university ‘mission’. These groupings include The Russell Group, Million+, and the University Alliance. Universities join the different groupings to lobby collectively for shared interests and to differentiate themselves from others in the sector, leading, some would say to unhelpful fragmentation, and even the reproduction of the British class system (Scott 2013). Table 1.1 shows the essence of the different missions of these groups (information taken from public websites).

Clearly there are overlapping interests, but broadly, the Russell Group are often referred to as ‘elite’, research intensive universities, with the ability to generate large amounts of funding, with strong ambitions to produce world leading research and teaching. The University Alliance has more of a focus on the development of the professions and on research that makes a difference at Regional and City levels. The Million+ group is concerned with enabling as many people as possible to benefit from higher education with teaching and research addressing a wide range of social issues. Importantly for the discussion on community engagement, The Russell Group seeks to “influence” regional and local communities; the University Alliance has a commitment to “the development of ... local communities (to help) them thrive and grow”; and the Million+ is committed to research that responds to the needs of UK public and charitable sectors, amongst others. All groups stress the importance of forming alliances with, collaborating with, and providing

Table 1.1 University ‘mission’ groupings (Source mission group websites)

Mission group and aim	Description of the group	Membership
Russell Group ...its aim is to help ensure that our universities have the optimum conditions in which to flourish and continue to make social, economic and cultural impacts through their world-leading research and teaching	(We) are committed to maintaining the very best research, an outstanding teaching and learning experience and unrivalled links with business and the public sector Our research-intensive, world-class universities play an important part in the intellectual life of the UK and have huge social, economic and cultural impacts locally, across the UK and around the globe Russell Group members also have a strong role and influence within their regional and local communities, collaborate with businesses on joint research projects and supply highly-qualified and highly-motivated graduates to the local workforce We are leaders in technical and professional education since the industrial revolution and are still crucial to the success of cities and sectors today. We educate the professional workforce of the future, provide flexible and responsive R&D to businesses of all sizes and solve the problems facing society locally, nationally and across the globe We are Britain’s universities for cities and regions. We are committed to providing the high quality teaching and world-class research, creating knowledge that makes a real difference Our on-going commitment to the development of our local communities helps them thrive and grow	24 “leading” UK universities, including the ancient, London colleges and the red-brick or civic universities
University Alliance We aspire to make the difference to our cities and regions through everything we do. We use our collective experience ... for the benefit of our students, businesses and civic partners. We will innovate together, learn from each other and support every member to transform lives and deliver growth		19 post-1992 universities—those that were formerly Polytechnics, plus the Open University
Million+ (The Association for Modern Universities, so called because between them they have over a million students) We champion, promote and raise awareness of the essential role played by modern universities in a world-leading higher education	We are the voice of 21st century higher education...We are driven by a strong commitment to robust research and evidence in policy decisions in order to support a successful and flourishing UK higher education system, which can rise to the global economic, social and cultural challenges of the 21st century MillionPlus believes in a higher education system which supports and responds to the needs of UK and international business, enterprise, professions, commerce, industry, and the public and charitable sectors. The group is dedicated to a quality university system which includes and supports anyone who has the ambition, talent and desire to succeed in higher education, whatever their background and wherever they live in the UK. The group is committed to research that responds to the needs of UK and international business, enterprise, professions, commerce, industry, and the public and charitable sectors	19 members, a mixture of ex-Polytechnics and relatively recently designated universities

research and teaching that meets the needs of business, but not all consider the needs of communities.

Farrar and Taylor (2010: 249) suggests that three different perspectives, or ideologies underpin not only the university groupings, but also their approach to community engagement. They refer to these as:

- the ‘high culture’, liberal elite model;
- the knowledge transfer, business model;
- the radical social purpose, social inclusion model.

The third way that universities have grouped together is in terms of more informal networks, largely to attract more funds for research. Some of these are geographical, with networks, largely of research intensive institutions existing in the North (N8 Research partnership); Midlands (M6 Midlands Innovation); East (Eastern Arc); South (Science and Engineering South Consortium[SES]); and South West of the country (GW4 Alliance), as well as from within the ‘golden triangle’ of Oxford, Cambridge and London. They are mostly networks of Russell Group Universities. Some are discipline based, most often linked to science and technology (such as the SES), but one exists to link the ‘best sporting universities’ in order to promote sport in Zambia (see the Wallace Group of universities). Again, these networks exist to give the consortia the edge in bidding for funding, to share equipment or research training (for example, the Eastern Academic research Association), or to promote targeted, interdisciplinary research. For example, the N8 Research Partnership (of eight research intensive universities in the North of England) is currently focussed on developing two Research Themes; AgriFood and Urban and Community Transformation. For the most part, there is no mention of communities or community engagement on the websites of these networks. The N8’s focus on urban and community transformation does include a commitment to the co-production of research through the collaboration between academics and research (end) users.

None of these networks or mission groups explicitly face or embrace community engagement, although there is a creeping emergence of Social Responsibility strategies which go some way to address the social responsibilities of the institutions, many of which incorporate elements of community engagement (Weiss 2016)—see Box 1.1.