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Valuing Community Engagement Throughout the Faculty Recruitment Process

Lynn Pelco

University of Richmond, lpelco@richmond.edu

Derek Miller

University of Richmond, dmiller4@richmond.edu

Todd R. Lookingbill

University of Richmond, tlooking@richmond.edu

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Valuing Community Engagement Throughout the Faculty Recruitment Process

PREPARED BY LYNN PELCO, DEREK MILLER,
AND TODD LOOKINGBILL

September 2022



Bonner Center for
Civic Engagement

Dr. Patricia Herrera, associate professor of theatre, Dr. Laura Browder, Tyler and Alice Haynes professor of American studies, and Dr. Alicia Diaz, associate professor of dance, lead a University of Richmond community-based learning class. Photograph by Tania del Carmen.



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Cover photograph: Dr. Kristine Grayson, associate professor of biology at the University of Richmond, leading a community-based learning class at the James River rock pools in Richmond, VA. Photograph by Jamie Betts.

This document was created by faculty and administrators at the University of Richmond to provide support for community engaged faculty work. Any suggestions provided in this document do not represent official university policy or practice. Faculty and administrators with questions about official university policies or practices should consult with leaders in their departments and schools and should read all related university policy documents.

Introduction

Department chairs play a critical role in recruiting community-engaged scholars to the university. By recruiting community-engaged scholars, departments help the university to fulfill its mission to engage meaningfully and ethically with both local and global communities. Additionally, research findings indicate that community-engaged scholars help departments to foster a more diverse academic community.

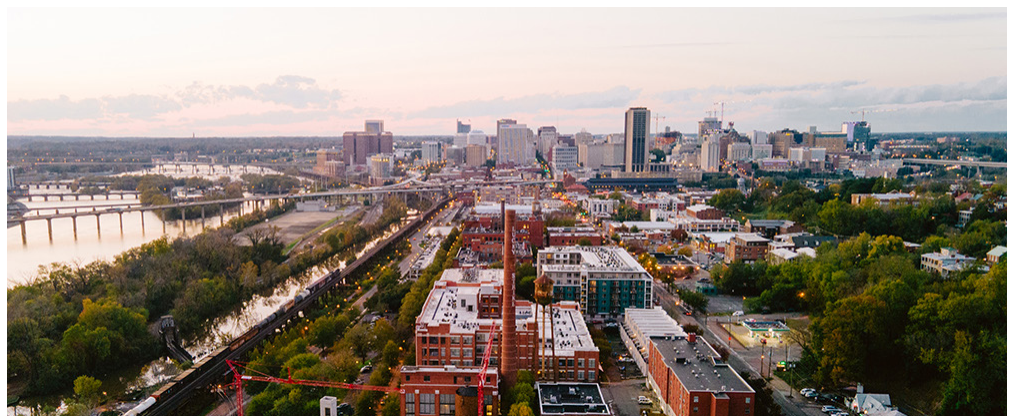
For example, a 2018 report entitled “Searching for a Diverse Faculty: Data Driven Recommendations,” (Stacy, A., Goulden, M., Frasch, K., Broughton, J.) describes strategies for attracting women and under-represented minority faculty. One of the most successful techniques is to shape a job description to signal a department’s interest in “public or engaged scholarship in fields that focus on direct societal improvement, particularly for under-served populations” (page 21). The University of Richmond’s Bonner Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) recently drafted a memo summarizing connections between the recruitment of diverse faculty and community-engaged scholarship (Miller, D., Dolson, T., Gale, S., & Howard, A.).

The CCE staff can provide guidance and direct support to department chairs and search committees interested in successfully recruiting high-quality community-engaged scholars in their disciplines. For example, CCE staff members can summarize current needs within the Richmond metropolitan region, share the latest research from the field of community engagement relevant to specific disciplines, and meet with candidates to discuss the institutional supports that the University of Richmond provides for their community-engaged teaching and scholarship.

The following steps comprise concrete strategies that department chairs and search committees may implement to successfully recruit a community-engaged scholar. Not every strategy is necessary to every search, and CCE staff members are available to help departments tailor these strategies to their particular context and needs.

SEARCH STEP 1: CREATING AND POSTING A FACULTY JOB ADVERTISEMENT

1. Evaluate and discuss the ways in which a community-engaged scholar could strengthen the department and discipline. With search committee members, articulate the ideal candidates' qualities as these relate to the candidate's community-engaged teaching, scholarship, and service.
2. Write a job advertisement that clearly emphasizes the requirement or preference for applicants who use community-engaged approaches in their teaching and research. The list of examples on page 5 provides examples of language that can be adapted and included in job postings to communicate this preference.
3. Where possible, describe the university as actively engaging with its communities. For example, "The University of Richmond is a private university located a short drive from downtown Richmond, Virginia, allowing both students and faculty to engage with this historic and vibrant urban community."
4. Expand the venues in which the job advertisement circulates, including venues that reach diverse and community-engaged applicant pools. The University of Richmond participates in several consortia that reach community-engaged scholar audiences and that offer outlets for sharing job postings. Consult with CCE staff to identify these consortia and other word-of-mouth and social media networks that community-engaged scholars frequent.



EXAMPLES OF JOB POSTING LANGUAGE FOR RECRUITING COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARS

Example 1

We are seeking a [discipline] who would contribute to the Department of XX. The ideal candidate would have research/teaching experience in the area of XX. Areas of particular interest include, but are not limited to: 1) community-engaged teaching, 2) community-engaged research, 3) XX, and 4) XX.

Example 2

The candidate selected will teach [topic] in the [undergraduate/graduate] program. Evidence of teaching excellence is very important. In addition, the faculty is expected to be committed to excellence in scholarly research. A Ph.D. in [discipline] is required. Preference will be given to candidates with a demonstrated record of community-engaged teaching and/or scholarship.

Example 3

Applicants should click “Apply Now” at the top of the page and submit a curriculum vitae, cover letter, and three statements in line with the descriptions below:

Statement #1: Describe your potential contributions to the university’s goals of representation, belonging, and capability, in particular as these contributions relate to the applicant’s knowledge and understanding of, track record in, and future plans for using community-engaged methodologies. Through their teaching, mentoring, research, and/or service activities, strong applicants will demonstrate potential for significant contributions to the University of Richmond’s commitment to community engagement that supports diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging priorities and that promotes the success and well-being of people of color, members of sexual and gender minority groups, first generation college students, immigrant students, and people with disabilities.

Statement #2: Describe your teaching and mentoring philosophy, practices, experience, and future plans. Provide evidence of teaching effectiveness if available. Strong applicants will demonstrate potential to effectively teach community-engaged courses at all levels, lower-level courses in [topic], and advanced seminars in the applicant’s area of expertise.

Statement #3: Describe your research program, outcomes, feasibility of research involving undergraduates at the University of Richmond, and future plans. Strong applicants will demonstrate potential for sustaining a high-quality independent program of community-engaged research that produces peer-reviewed scholarship, involves undergraduates in substantive research outcomes, and disseminates findings to community stakeholders.

SEARCH STEP 2: PREPARING TO REVIEW AND INTERVIEW APPLICANTS

1. Consider and discuss how the search committee will review each applicant's submitted materials, including evidence of both community-engaged teaching and/or scholarship. Create a space in the application review process (e.g., develop review categories or subcategories) for assessing the quality and quantity of each applicant's community-engaged teaching and community-engaged scholarship. Ratings and qualitative comments in these categories will remind committee members to specifically discuss each applicant's community-engaged accomplishments before a short-list of candidates is decided. The CCE staff is available to consult with search committees on the development of community-engagement focused review criteria or search committees can adapt the example of a community-engaged teaching and research review criteria rubric included in Appendix 1.
2. Develop specific interview questions for shortlisted candidates that query the candidates' community-engaged experiences. The CCE staff is available to consult with search committees on the development of these questions, or search committees may adapt the list of sample community-engaged teaching and research interview questions included in Appendix 2.
3. Consider including community partners as part of the recruitment process. The CCE staff is available to consult with search committees on strategies for engaging community partners in the interview process.

SEARCH STEP 3: HOLDING FIRST-ROUND INTERVIEWS

1. See Search Step 2: Items 2 and 3 on page 6.
2. Be prepared to answer questions from interviewees regarding the community-engagement activities that are already underway in the department or school.
3. Be prepared to answer questions from interviewees regarding resources and support for community engagement that are available to faculty at the department, school, and university level, including those that the CCE offers.
4. If community partners participate in first-round interviews, be sure to solicit their feedback regarding interviewees' responses. Community partners often bring a unique and valuable perspective to the search process that can inform the selection of finalists from the candidate list.

SEARCH STEP 4: HOSTING CAMPUS VISITS FOR FINALISTS

1. It is extremely helpful to coordinate with the CCE when creating the campus visit agenda for finalist scholars who identify as community-engaged. CCE staff members are available to meet with these finalists to ensure that they receive relevant information related to their own community-engaged work. Such information could include introductions to community partners, resources available to support community-engaged teaching, and opportunities for networking with other community-engaged scholars on campus.
2. Be sure to showcase the city of Richmond during the campus interview. A guided driving tour of the city and/or visits to specific community partner sites may be of particular interest to community-engaged scholars.
3. Include time in the agenda to meet and talk with other community-engaged scholars across campus. The CCE staff can help search committees to identify these scholars.
4. The finalists' campus visit agendas should also include time with students from the hiring department or school who have participated in community-engaged coursework and/or are current Bonner Scholars.

SEARCH STEP 5: RECRUITING THE BEST CANDIDATE FROM THE FINALIST POOL

1. Once the best candidate has been identified, the department chair and hiring committee play pivotal roles in helping to recruit the preferred scholar to the University of Richmond. For community-engaged scholars, the levels of institutional, departmental, and community support for community-engagement can tip the scale between two competing offers.
2. Offer to arrange virtual follow-up conversation between individuals whom the candidate met while on campus (e.g., community partners, community-engaged faculty colleagues, CCE staff).
3. If the finalist candidate plans to visit campus for a second time, the CCE staff can help to organize additional off-campus conversations with potential community partners.
4. If the job opening is a tenure-line position, the finalist candidate may be interested in talking with the department chair and/or tenured community-engaged faculty members in the department/school about promotion and tenure for community-engaged scholars. CCE staff can also talk with finalist candidates about the ways in which the CCE supports tenure-line community-engaged scholars who are navigating the promotion and tenure process.



Conclusion

Department chairs are uniquely positioned to help their departments successfully attract outstanding community-engaged faculty scholars. The ideas listed in this document provide concrete strategies for chairs and search committee members to use during faculty searches. These strategies can help to ensure that the recruited community-engaged scholar brings the skills and experiences needed to succeed in the position and that the scholar will thrive both in Richmond and at our university.

References

Miller, D., Dolson, T., Gale, S., & Howard, A. (2018). *Supporting inclusive excellence through community-engaged scholarship and teaching*. The Bonner Center for Civic Engagement, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA. https://engage.richmond.edu/_KP4_content/images/engage/community-based-learning/recent-courses/2018-inclusive-excellence-engaged-scholarship.pdf

Stacy, A., Goulden, M., Frasch, K., & Broughton, J. (2018). *Search for a diverse faculty: Data driven recommendations*. University of California, Berkeley, California. https://www.ofew.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/searching_for_a_diverse_faculty-_data-driven_recommendations.pdf

Appendix I

RUBRIC FOR REVIEWING EVIDENCE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN FACULTY JOB APPLICATIONS

DIRECTIONS

This rubric is designed to be a tool that assists search committee members in their careful reading of faculty job written applications for evidence of high-quality community engagement. This tool is most useful when used as a springboard for committee discussions. It is not recommended that the rubric's evidence categories be numbered and applicants ranked by their numeric sums.

Note: Asterisks on the rubric relate to the University of Richmond's definitions for these categories, and these definitions are provided on page 3 of this rubric.

1. Identity as a community-engaged scholar

Evident	Emerging	Not Evident
The applicant frequently identifies community engagement as a pervasive identity or approach to faculty work across teaching, research and service.	The applicant explicitly identifies themselves as a community-engaged faculty member in at least one place in their submitted materials.	The applicant makes no mention of community engagement being a professional identity or approach to their faculty work.

2. Mutually beneficial relationships with community partners

Evident	Emerging	Not Evident
The applicant discusses one or more partnerships and explicitly describes ways in which the partners have benefited in the relationship (i.e., reciprocity).	The applicant explicitly identifies at least one community partner or partnership AND describes the way in which reciprocity (i.e., mutual benefit) is evident in the partnership(s).	The applicant makes no mention of community partners or partnerships for teaching, research or service OR a partner partnership is named but no discussion of partnership reciprocity/mutual benefit is provided.

3. Community-engaged and community-based teaching*

Evident	Emerging	Not Evident
The applicant discusses one or more community-engaged teaching experience(s) that deeply involve community partnerships AND explicitly describes ways in which partners have collaborated in and/or benefited from the partnerships.	The applicant may explicitly identify one or more community-based teaching experiences BUT ALSO describes at least one teaching experience which involves a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship with a community partner (i.e., community-engaged teaching).	The applicant makes no mention of having had teaching experiences that engage community partners, OR the applicant's engagement has involved a community interaction but with no evidence of a collaborative community partnership (e.g., the applicant uses community-based teaching only).

4. Public scholarship**

Evident	Emerging	Not Evident
<p>The applicant discusses one or more scholarly endeavors that engage the expertise of community stakeholders in order to co-create new knowledge that serves a public good extending beyond the academic purpose of the work. The applicant has disseminated the findings of their public scholarship through academic and/or nontraditional outlets.</p>	<p>The applicant explicitly identifies at least one scholarly endeavor that engaged the expertise of community stakeholders and that involved a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship with a community partner. Dissemination of findings from these public scholarship projects may not yet have occurred or may be emerging.</p>	<p>The applicant makes no mention of having had public scholarship experiences that engage the expertise of community partners to co-create new knowledge. If scholarship involves the public, it occurs primarily “in” or “on” the community rather than “with” the community.</p>

5. Community-engaged service***

Evident	Emerging	Not Evident
<p>The applicant provides several examples of service in which they contributed their professional or disciplinary expertise to a public purpose in addition to service to their university or professional communities.</p>	<p>The applicant provides at least one example of service in which they contributed their professional or disciplinary expertise to a public purpose in addition to service to their university or professional communities.</p>	<p>The applicant provides evidence of service activities that benefit the applicant’s university or professional communities. No examples of service are evident in the submitted materials in which the applicant applied their professional or disciplinary expertise to a direct public purpose.</p>

COMMENTS:

DEFINITIONS FOR COMMUNITY-ENGAGED FACULTY ACTIVITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

In 2019, the University of Richmond's Bonner Center for Civic Engagement recommended institutional definitions for community-engaged teaching, public scholarship, and community-engaged service. These definitions are shown below and can be referenced in full in the center's memo of Key Terms and Definitions for Community-Engaged Faculty Activities at UR at <https://engage.richmond.edu/about/pdfs/Terms-EngagedFaculty.pdf>.

****Community-engaged teaching***

When community-based learning classes fulfill pedagogical and community needs in a context of partnership and reciprocity, they may be better termed community-engaged classes. Community-engaged classes require a deep level of commitment from faculty and from community partners, and encourage collaboration among faculty, students, and community members in order to generate new knowledge and further the learning of all involved.

Community-engaged teaching differs from community-based teaching and learning. Community-based learning refers to a broad spectrum of curricular activity that connects students to communities for the purpose of deepening learning. Community-based learning can include a variety of modes, including but not limited to service-learning; collaborative projects with community partners; clinical education, student teaching, and internships; bringing community collaborators into the classroom; and study trips and immersive engagement with community experts. Across these modes, community-based learning activities further learning by: providing context for conceptual course content; providing an opportunity to apply course methods with an intent to deepen learning; and supporting critical thinking. Some community-based learning classes engage students in community activity as a component of the class; others integrate community engagement across the entire class.

*****Public scholarship***

Public scholarship is scholarly and/or other creative activity that emerges when faculty use their expertise in order to create new knowledge that serves a public good extending beyond the academic purpose of the work. Public scholarship encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities; the emphasis of public scholarship is on disseminating the work to new audiences and/or in new ways. When faculty engage their expertise with the expertise of community stakeholders in order to co-create new knowledge that serves a public good extending beyond the academic purpose of the work, it is called community-engaged scholarship. Through a coherent, purposeful sequence of activities, both public scholarship and community-engaged scholarship yield artifacts of public and intellectual value, invite peer collaboration and review from a broad group of relevant experts, and are presented in a form that others can use, test, and build upon.

******Community-engaged service***

Community-engaged service is faculty activity relevant to a faculty member's profession and discipline that involves the exercise of the faculty member's professional knowledge or abilities, supports the University's mission, and contributes to a public purpose. Faculty may provide community-engaged service in a variety of ways, from authoring op-eds to providing leadership in or making contributions to community development activities. Community-engaged service differs from service to the university community or to one's professional community in that it is oriented towards community organizations or purposes. It differs from consulting in that the activity is not undertaken for financial gain.

Appendix 2

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Search committees are encouraged to review the questions below and select one or more from each category to ask applicants who are being interviewed for faculty positions for which community engagement is a required or preferred qualification.

Community-engaged teaching

1. Tell us about teaching experiences where you have engaged with a community or community partner. What role(s) did the community or community partner play in those experiences?
2. How have students benefited from your community-engaged teaching? How do you know?
3. Describe a community-engaged teaching strategy that has worked well for you?
4. Where have you hit road bumps or barriers in your community-engaged teaching and have you been able to overcome these? If so, how?

Public scholarship

1. Describe a time when you have collaborated with a community partner to address a public good through research. What role(s) did the community partner play in this project?
2. Describe how you have or how you plan to disseminate the findings of your public scholarship.

Community-engaged service

1. Describe a time when you have been able to contribute your professional or disciplinary expertise to address a public purpose through service.
2. Community-engaged service can sometimes lead to deeper engagement between a faculty member and a community or community partner. Has your community-engaged service ever led to a deeper partnership with a community? If so, please describe.

Reciprocity in community partnerships

1. Explain the strategies you have used to develop mutually beneficial relationships with community partners. How have those partnerships changed/evolved over time?
2. In what ways have your community partners benefited from your engagement with them?

Identity as a community-engaged scholar

1. You have been involved with community partnerships in your faculty work. Please tell us what has motivated you to do this work.
2. Why is faculty community engagement important in ___[discipline]___?
3. Where do you see your community-engagement work going over the next few years? What accomplishments would you like to realize?

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