
**THE C. PETER MAGRATH /
W. K. KELLOGG
ENGAGEMENT AWARD**

AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS VALUE TO ENGAGEMENT

John V. Byrne

April 2009



1307 New York Avenue, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction	3
General Observations.....	3
Impacts of the Award.....	4
Lessons Learned and Best Practices.....	7
Improving the Award Selection Process.....	9
Concluding Comments.....	10
Acknowledgements.....	12
Appendices	
Appendix A: Process Used in Preparation of the Report.....	13
Appendix B: Email messages sent soliciting comments.....	14
Appendix C: Respondents to Email Request for Comments.....	16

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1999 the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-grant Universities released its report on engagement, “Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution.” Subsequently, the Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award was created to recognize C. Peter Magrath at the time of his retirement from the presidency of the National Association of State Universities and Land-grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the leadership role he played in creating the Kellogg Commission and in encouraging universities to adopt Engagement as part of their missions. The Award is based on an annual national competition and is presented to the institution that best exemplifies Engagement as defined by the Kellogg Commission: a partnership between the university and society in which goals and objectives are jointly developed, expertise and resources are shared and each partner benefits from the activities of the partnership.

Based on discussions with interested university and community leaders and on a review of all the competitive proposals submitted for the Award over the past three years, this report presents an evaluation of the impact the award has had in stimulating Engagement and recommends changes in the award process.

It is clear the award has increased the recognition of the importance of Engagement within the communities being served and the universities that partner with them. Students, faculty and community leaders have gained in knowledge and understanding of each other’s strengths and each has benefitted by the projects they have partnered. They have learned mutual trust and respect based on honest communication and the achievement of common goals. By working together they have created an ecology of Engagement that has influence beyond the sphere of the projects described in the proposals submitted. The Award itself serves as a symbol of prestige for all institutions and communities involved. It raises the stature of higher education in communities and impacts pedagogy and curricula on campuses.

The process of proposal evaluation and the selection of awardees is generally seen as successful, but like all processes in a formative stage, it can and should be improved. This report identifies areas needing review and suggests possible changes. Following the third round of competitive awards a group of university and community leaders should meet to review the Award’s guidelines, policies and procedures and make changes to clarify the competitive process and increase awareness of Engagement and of the Award nationally and internationally.

The Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award is important. It signals to higher education and to society at large that by working together with mutual respect and trust, the two cultures and the individuals involved can all benefit. The Award is a symbol of the importance and excellence that defines Engagement. The Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award validates the importance of Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

In 1999 the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities released its report on Engagement, “Returning to our Roots: The Engaged Institution.”¹ Although the concept of Engagement was not original with the Kellogg Commission, the report emphasized the importance of Engagement and urged that Engagement become part of the missions of universities. It brought Engagement to the attention of higher education nationally and internationally and clearly defined what the Commission envisioned Engagement to be. According to the Commission, Engagement is more than extension, more than outreach. Engagement involves an equal partnership between college and university and the community those institutions serve. An Engagement partnership is one in which goals and objectives are jointly developed, expertise and resources are shared and each partner benefits from the activities of the partnership.

During the ten years since the release of the report, Engagement has been adopted by an increasing number of American universities and colleges. New journals devoted to Engagement have been created, universities have restructured themselves to be Engaged more effectively with society, educational associations have added commissions and committees devoted to Engagement and national organizations have been created to address the “scholarship of Engagement.” Engagement as envisioned by the Kellogg Commission has been and is being endorsed by public higher education and is now part of the mission of many universities.

The Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award was first presented in 2006 to Martin Jischke, who chaired the group responsible for the preparation of the Kellogg Commission's report on Engagement. Subsequent awards based on competitive proposals have recognized institutions for their engagement activities. From an evaluation of proposals by independent reviewers, five regional winners are selected. The projects of the five regional winners are then evaluated and one project from that group is chosen to receive the national award, which is presented during the opening session of the annual meeting of NASULGC (APLU). In 2007 the national award went to Virginia Tech; in 2008, to Penn State.

This report is an assessment of the value of the award and its impact in promoting Engagement. It is based on the author's personal review of the proposals submitted to date and on personal communications with faculty, university administrators and community leaders involved in the Engagement process.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The term “engagement” is now used throughout higher education, although not always in the manner defined by the Kellogg Commission. It is often applied to any interaction of persons or organizations: faculty with students and university personnel with representatives of society. It can mean traditional extension and “outreach” (service delivered in one direction - outwards - from the university to society). To some, “service learning” is engagement. Or, it can mean “Engagement” as defined by the Kellogg Commission. It is this latter meaning which was intended by the

¹ In this report Engagement with a capital “E” is used to refer to engagement as defined by the Kellogg Commission.

originators of the Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award. Unfortunately, the Kellogg Commission definition of the term does not appear to be fully understood by many of the authors of proposals submitted in competition for the Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award.

The Kellogg Commission recognized that Engagement involved Learning and therefore students should be involved in Engagement with society. Many of the proposals submitted did include students in their projects and a number of institutions used “Service Learning” specifically as their engagement project. Service Learning, recognized as beneficial to student development, is now included as a meaningful part of curricula and at some universities is a requirement for graduation.

Engagement efforts described in the proposals included agricultural or environmental projects, methods of enhancing good health or helping citizens to understand the pathways to good health, and improvements in K-12 education in poor communities, both urban and rural. Some projects involved the preparation of documentary films, using students as “legal” mediators, preparing community newspapers, improving the quality of life in poverty-stricken areas, providing affordable housing and creating hands-on education projects for the children of absentee military personnel (“military kids”). One university’s efforts led to the creation of a branch campus in a major city center.

Although not always adhering to the Kellogg Commission definition of “Engagement,” virtually every proposal presented efforts of considerable value to society and to the faculty and students of the participating universities. Outreach, service learning, Engagement - all create a positive image of the university and provide a tangible benefit to the community partner and to the general populace.

IMPACTS OF THE AWARD

Many, if not most, of the institutions submitting proposals have been involved in some form of engagement for years—for some, long before the release of the Kellogg Commission’s report on Engagement. A number of participants acknowledged that preparation of the proposal for the award stimulated recognition of the importance of Engagement on their campus. Other participants noted that simply being selected by their administration as the project of choice for submission was a mark of prestige on their campus. To be an award recipient certainly added to that recognition. For all the institutions submitting proposals, the award highlighted the importance of Engagement and publicly validated that importance.

Preparing a competitive proposal is a substantial effort and for those who made the extra effort, the campus environment changed. For them, the award was an indication that (1) Engagement was important and (2) their project was of special importance to their university and to the society being served.

From an administrator's letter of support:

"In the days and weeks leading up to the event (a reception celebrating the project) the campus was transformed into a cohesive team all working towards making this the largest and most successful event in its 50 year history. Of course there was the anxiety of "what if no one shows up?" On February 1 the reception was held, along with the showing of the documentary and town forum. To our great delight over 500 people attended. Community leaders, local residents, students from other colleges/universities, and others from Kent State University attended . . . So this project, which started with two professors and a class, has transformed a small university campus from working in departmental silos and little campus pride into a campus culture of 'we can do it,' tremendous respect for their colleagues, and many new ideas for interdisciplinary collaborations between faculty and among students. Community leaders continue to talk about what "their" university campus has accomplished and are asking for new ways that the community and campus can engage in meaningful collaborations. As time passes, we know that many more students will be engaged in collaborations and projects that will enrich their learning experiences. I cannot imagine a more deserving project for the C. Peter Magrath/W.K. Kellogg Foundation Engagement Award."

- Wanda Thomas, Dean

Trumbull Campus, Kent State University

The award itself probably has little direct impact on university students. However, student letters of endorsements reveal the impact the process of Engagement itself had on the students involved. One student wrote:

"I have been trying to pin down in my mind what made this semester so wonderful. I can't separate all that I learned and participated in and therefore, I don't know if it was working at Over-the-Rhine Community Housing, class, or forming new relationships with friends and community members that made my semester what it has been. I know that all of my experiences have each uniquely contributed to my semester and for that I am grateful. I have fallen in love with this community and the work that is being done here and I don't know when this happened or why, really. I can't pinpoint a moment or day when I felt that connection to this community, but it has happened.

"I look forward to the growth that will continue to happen for me. I know that this paper was supposed to be a wrap-up of the semester, but I can't get the future out of my mind. This semester has most definitely been a foundation that will support whatever comes next. It is this "next" part that I am ecstatic about right now. I look forward to using the skills and knowledge that the classes and community engagement have given me. I look forward to the adjustment of being in this community without my classmates. I am looking at this next semester as a time for me to realize if I love this community as much without many members of my Over-the-Rhine family here. I know full well that any experience can be made good or bad by the people you experience it with, and as I love my fellow students I am

curious to see what my experience next semester will be like without their constant presence and support.

“I take this shift in focus from college worries to life worries as a sign that this semester’s Over-the-Rhine Residency Program worked on me. “Worked” in the way that it was designed to work on students. It has overwhelmed by mind and senses and I can’t get away from it. I think about issues like gentrification, city life, urban education, business development, racial tension, class conflict, police presence, and community activism all of the time. All of the time. And the best part about it is that I want to be thinking about these issues all of the time. Unlike so many classes at Miami I don’t shut off the material when I leave the class. I can’t shut it off here, and I don’t want to.”

- University of Miami of Ohio student

In the community being served the award is a symbol of prestige, an indication of the importance of Engagement and a recognition of the importance of the special partnership that exists between the community and the university. The award helps community leaders recognize the importance of the projects they partnered with the university and the efforts made by the university to serve the community.

From a community leader in Warren Ohio:

“. . . Based on my varied experiences in this community and not being a local resident I was asked to participate in the documentary’s town forum. To be supportive of the school project, I accepted without realizing the profound impact this event would have.

“After either attending the showing of the documentary and town forum or seeing it on PBS, my professional colleagues were shocked by the presentation because they were totally unaware of the struggles their Black co-workers endured. Before this event, there had never been a forum where racial issues could be discussed. All of a sudden conversations of the past and present were happening. There is the sharing of stories which still need to be told. The event provided a common point of reference to continue to explore new ways of making this a better place to live.

“. . . It is also remarkable that a group of students and Caucasian faculty could have gotten the Black community to talk about racial segregation and racism. These are painful memories and not easily shared. Without a doubt Drs. Bindas and Merryman, along with their students, built a trust among these people to get them to freely tell their stories. Their passion and profound desire to want others to know led them to go beyond a simple class project.

“. . . I commend the university, its faculty and students for possibly beginning a transformation of this community’s culture and a renewed spirit of equality among all who live here. I was proud to play a small role and look forward to phase 2 of the project.”

During the Engagement process, community and university participants gain trust and respect for

one another. They recognize that such mutual respect and trust can carry over into other areas of partnership. The image of the university is enhanced in the eyes of the community and respect for community citizens broadens the awareness of university students, faculty and administration of the competence of community leaders. The Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award enhances the visibility and the prestige of Engagement. It contributes to an ecology of Engagement.

LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

Each proposal included a section on “lessons learned” and “best practices” employed during the project. Although collectively the lessons learned are important, for the most part they were presented in a general way. “Best practices” were rarely articulated and when they were, they were often presented in a manner not particularly useful to others. In many proposals “challenges” were presented as substitutes for “lessons learned,” and “lessons learned” and “best practices” were lumped together and not readily separated. The Request for Applications needs to be clarified with respect to “Challenges,” “Lessons Learned,” and “Best Practices” and what is looked for by proposal evaluators.

In spite of these shortcomings, a number of attributes necessary for success can be distilled from the proposals. Simply stated, these are:

- trust and respect by each partner for the other;
- understanding of the culture and the needs of each partner;
- a shared development of project vision, mission, goals, organizational structures, and policies and practice, including metrics for an assessment of progress and success;
- frank communication among all partners regularly and often;
- public understanding based on public relations and aggressive marketing of the product;
- a deep desire for success by all partners and the persistence to achieve common goals; and
- strong committed leadership by both community and university.

A number of proposals provided specific instructions for achieving success:

- nothing should be taken for granted;
- frank communication should be exercised often so there are few or no surprises;
- stakeholders should be involved from the very beginning of the project;
- if university personnel are to be located in a project area, their presence should be full time and careful selection of facilities is required;
- to the degree possible, community participants should be empowered to make decisions;
- listen carefully, particularly to community leaders;
- for some projects metrics and measurable outcomes may be required

- maintaining participation requires diligence and frequent self-examination by all partners; finding a common passion for results is critical;
- procedures and organizational structure should be developed by all partners at the beginning of a project, including a process for continued assessment of procedural effectiveness;
- it is important to manage expectations. Expectations must be realistic. Unrealistic expectations by any of the partners can be detrimental to the success and the very survival of a project;
- a successful partnership requires responsiveness and professionalism;
- most important to achieving trust and respect is the communication process. Frank communication must be honest, frequent and consistent.

Other suggestions included:

- to create awareness and enhance the environment for Engagement, market Engagement and specific projects to the general public;
- minimize university involvement in community politics;
- if possible, create a single point of contact in the university;
- use the students involved in Engagement projects to communicate the excitement of Engagement to other students on campus through talks to student groups;
- avoid boredom by monitoring change and by celebrating success; and
- create catchy acronyms (PROSPER: Promoting School-community Partnerships to Enhance Resilience; FOCUS: Fostering Our community and Understanding of Science).

One proposal summed up “Best Practices” with a quote from Henry Ford:

“Coming together is a beginning
 Staying together is Progress
 Working Together is Success!”

IMPROVING THE AWARD SELECTION PROCESS

Although the process of proposal evaluation and selection of a winner works well, it needs to be improved. Because a number of proposals missed the target with respect to an understanding of Engagement as defined by the Kellogg Commission, the Request for Application (RFA) should include a brief definition of Engagement and a summary of the Seven Part Test of Engagement, which was included in the 1999 Engagement report of the Commission. This would help identify exactly what is expected and could eliminate fruitless efforts by some institutions. Also, a brief statement to clarify what is meant by “institutional commitment” would be helpful.

Several individuals responsible for submitting proposals expressed disappointment at the lack of follow-up to the selection process. The absence of any recognition of proposal submission and feedback regarding their “failed” proposal disappointed some. Brief recognition of the proposals submitted in an APLU on-line publication could recognize the institutions submitting proposals. A letter to the principal authors explaining any deficiencies in their proposal would also be helpful. It was recommended that a “certificate of participation” with sufficient copies to distribute on campus and in the community would be appreciated. Such certificates could be of value in marketing both Engagement and the Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award. Thus, recognition of the unsuccessful proposals as well as the winners would be appreciated as would feedback on how the proposals might be improved. Marketing of Engagement and the award could result in an increase in the awareness of the importance of Engagement and a corresponding increase in the number of proposals submitted.

In summary, the process could be improved by:

- providing a short definition of Engagement as articulated by the Kellogg Commission, possibly with the seven-part test;
- requiring greater detail as to how the institution demonstrated its commitment to Engagement;
- continuing the proposal evaluation process as at present; and
- following up with public recognition, advice on how to improve the proposal and a certificate of appreciation to all participants, university and community.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

1. Engagement as defined by the Kellogg Commission is increasingly important. However, it is not widely understood and outreach, which is a one-way action, is often mistaken for Engagement.
2. The Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award validates Engagement publically and on campus. There is no evidence at this time that the Award has attracted institutions which are not already involved in Engagement to adopt Engagement as part of their university mission.
3. The Award serves as an important and tangible symbol to the communities being served that higher education recognizes the importance of partnerships with community leaders and organizations to address community problems.
4. Because Engagement provides important learning opportunities, students should be involved in Engagement projects.
5. Universities that have been successful in engaging with community groups recognize the importance of a number of attributes of successful programs. These include mutual trust and respect based to a great degree on regular open communication, a shared development

by all partners of project vision, mission, goals, policies and procedures; a deep desire for project success by all partners and the persistence of all involved to see the project completed successfully.

6. In order to reach a greater number of universities and colleges and to encourage them to submit proposals for the Award an aggressive national marketing program about the Award should be developed. University Advancement leadership should be made aware of the importance of Engagement as a defining characteristic of the modern university.
7. Following the third round of competition, a group of university and community leaders should meet to review the award process, including Requests for Application, guidelines and evaluation of proposals, and recognition of award recipients.
8. The Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award is important. It has signaled to higher education and society that by working together they and the individuals involved will all benefit.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author appreciates the support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (now the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities). Many discussions concerning Engagement with C. Peter Magrath, Mort Neufville and Gail Imig set the general direction for this report. Comments by Linda Benning, David Andrews, Steve Dempsey, John Dooley, Duane Ford, David Haase, David Knauft, Pamela S. Lane-Geron, Bobby Moser, Shannon Wilder and James Zuiches were most helpful. This report could not have been prepared without the editorial and clerical assistance provided by my valued colleague, Carol Mason.

Appendix A

Process Used in Preparation of the Report

Before preparing this report, email messages soliciting comments on the impact and importance of the Award were sent to the authors of the proposals submitted during the first two rounds of competition; additional comments by engagement leaders known to this author were also collected (see Appendix B). Those providing comments are listed in Appendix C. All proposals submitted during the first two rounds of competition were studied and serve as the basis for much of this report.

Appendix B

Email messages sent soliciting comments concerning the importance of the Award to institutions submitting proposals:

“Dear friend of Engagement:

Almost ten years ago the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities released its report on engagement, “Returning to Our Roots: the Engaged Institution.” This was an effort to stimulate engagement as a way in which universities could enhance their contributions to American society. Since the publication of that report, engagement has caught on as a vital part of the mission of many universities. To further encourage and to recognize those universities actively engaged with society the W. K. Kellogg Foundation joined with the National Association of State and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) to create the “C. Peter Magrath/W. K. Kellogg Engagement Award.” During the past two years your university submitted a proposal in competition for the “Magrath Engagement Award.” I believe you were personally involved in the preparation of that proposal.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation has asked me, as former Executive Director of the Kellogg Commission, to evaluate the impact the Magrath Engagement Award has had on engagement.

I need your help. You can help me in my evaluation by responding to this message either by e-mail or by phoning me at 541-737-3542.

In order to guide you with any comments you might care to make I offer the following few questions, and these are only for guidance.

- (1) Has the Magrath Award had an impact on engagement at your university? If so, in what way?
- (2) What lessons were learned as you implemented the engagement process?
- (3) What “best practices” are you willing to share with other engaged universities?
- (4) What suggestions do you have for improving the Magrath Award competition and/or proposal preparation?

Please don’t make a chore of this request. I realize you are very busy, but your response will be important to me. In appreciation for your response I will share with you my evaluation of the impact of the award when my report is completed. Thank you for any assistance you can provide.

All good wishes.

John Byrne, former Executive Director of the Kellogg Commission
on the Future of State and Land-grant Universities”

Message sent to university leaders known to be supportive of Engagement:

“Dear _____ :

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the 1999 release of the Kellogg Commission report on Engagement, “Returning to our Roots: The Engaged Institution”, it seems obvious that engagement is alive and well at many forward thinking and acting universities such as your own. An assessment of engagement and most specifically of the impact of the C. Peter Magrath/W. K. Kellogg Engagement Award seems appropriate at this time. I have been asked by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to conduct such an evaluation, specifically of the impact of the Magrath/Kellogg Engagement Award on engagement by America’s universities. A few brief thoughts from you concerning any impact the Magrath Award has had at your university would be helpful to me as I conduct my evaluation. I’m sure you’re very busy, so please don’t make a chore of this. A few off-the-top-of- your- head comments e-mailed to me will be very useful to me.

A couple of questions might help as a guide to any response you might offer me:

Has the existence of the Award materially enhanced engagement or is its value primarily one of validation of the concept and practice of engagement?

As you and your institution have been involved in engagement are there any special lessons learned or best practices you would share with others?.

Thanks for any attention you give this request. All good wishes.

John Byrne”

Appendix C

Respondents to Email Request for Comments

Andrews, David: The Ohio State University

Dempsey, Steve: University of Georgia

Dooley, John: Virginia Tech

Ford, Duane: University of Wisconsin at Platteville

Haase, David: North Carolina State University

Knauff, David: University of Georgia

Lane-Geron, Pamela S: California State University at Fresno

Moser, Bobby: The Ohio State University

Wilder, Shannon: University of Georgia

Zuiches, James: North Carolina State University