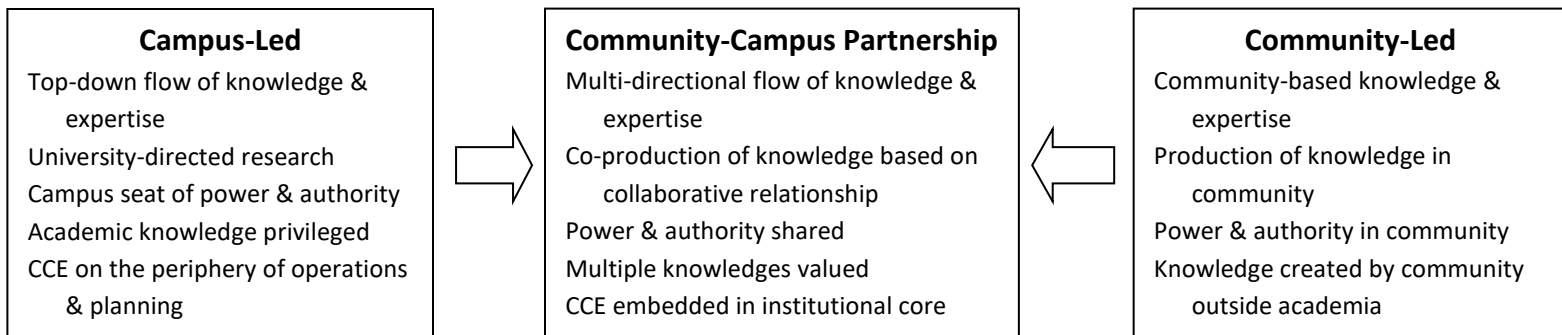


Assessing Culture Change in PSIs

Community Co-Lead Academic Co-Lead

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Key question informing our work:

How might 'community-first' approaches to community-campus engagement (CCE) be more effectively embedded within post-secondary institutions (PSIs)?

What we've learned so far:

- **Culture change** occurs when the ethics of CCE are authentically **integrated into the everyday practices** of the PSI, with **principles of reciprocity and mutuality** deeply embedded **from the periphery to the core**;
- **Engaged campuses** embed an ethic or philosophy of community-first CCE across organizational mission, planning & structure, curriculum & pedagogy, faculty workload, reward & recognition, community partnerships, and student engagement;
- **Aligning CCE language and definitions** across PSI mission and vision statements, strategic planning documents, budgets, and public relations **ensures effective dialogue and communication**, key for enhancing buy-in and community-campus relationships;
- Necessary **boundary-spanning leadership** across all levels of campus administration, as well as at external funders, government, and public agencies, is systematically enhanced when **CCE capacities are embedded in job descriptions** and **regularly celebrated** in campus and public communications;
- **Centralized engagement units** promote more **accessible CCE pathways** and enhance the visibility, legitimacy, and sustainability of the CCE movement, provided the CCE mandate is not (perceived to be) constrained to the engagement office;
- **A healthy balance** of protected, internal funding and application-based external funding demonstrates **campus-wide support and off-campus respect** for CCE as a **credible funding pathway**, a message key for advancing the CCE movement considering the high value placed on funding as a metric of success in higher education;
- Supports for engaged faculty formalized in **promotion and tenure policies** are crucial for **recognizing and empowering scholars** in ways that remove CCE from the domain of the extra-curricular to place it firmly 'on the desk';
- **Co-creation of meaningful assessment** of the impact of CCE on communities, students, broader society, and higher education is key to **legitimizing CCE and advocating for sustainable funding pathways**, particularly in the neoliberal era of privatization, for-profit research, and data-based indicators of success.

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Key assumption informing our work:

Canadian community and campus-based CCE practitioners are calling for a means of assessing, classifying, strategically planning, aligning, and thus improving, localized efforts to enable better sharing of experiences and limited resources, while strengthening the legitimacy, recognition, and valuation of CCE for enhanced advocacy locally, nationally, and internationally.

What we've learned so far:

- **Assessing the evolution of culture change** in PSIs is a complex task with **no 'one size fits all' solution** because the very essence of community-first CCE **requires out-of-the-box thinking** about what outcomes are valued, whose perspectives are represented, and how progress is perceived and assessed;
- Campus self-assessment is a useful exercise for **providing a 'snapshot in time'** relative to a continuum of culture change (visualized above); **assessing progress toward engagement goals**; identifying **strengths and opportunities for improvement** related to the engagement mandate; and **locating PSI capacities** within the broader CCE network;
- Many tools exist to help frame the self-assessment process: **Checklists** provide minimal depth; **benchmarks** set performance indicators and judge improvement over time; **matrices** provide a more comprehensive approach to **rubrics**, both of which allow for scaled assessment of identified priority areas; and, **systems analyses** require ample time for quantitative and qualitative data collection and interpretation.

Ongoing dialogue informing this work:

What does Canadian community-first CCE look like?

How do we define the 'community' in Canadian CCE?

Is assessment of culture change in PSIs a useful endeavour?

Who is assessment for, who does the assessing, and to what purpose?

What are the internal & external drivers and incentives for increasing the public accountability & responsiveness of higher education?

Existing models of CCE assessment we're watching:

Levels of Commitment to Engagement Matrix (Barbara Holland; [click here to view](#))

Developed in 1997 via 23 PSI case studies to promote alignment of service learning with campus engagement strategies; a diagnostic tool to facilitate campus planning, decision-making, and evaluation; assesses a PSI's level of commitment to engagement across seven key areas.

Carnegie Foundation Elective Community Engagement Classification ([click here to view](#))

Developed in 2005 as a documentation framework for the systematic classification of CE in American PSIs; requires input of qualitative and quantitative data across *foundational indicators* (mission, planning, communications, policies) and *categories of CE* (projects & partnerships).

EDGE Tool (NCCPE-UK; [click here to view](#))

Developed in 2008 as part of a national initiative to shift culture change in higher education; informed by Holland matrix, Carnegie, and UK experience; features nine key dimensions across three sectors – purpose, process, and people – assessed and located on a continuum of culture change.