The Innovative Power of Partnership

Ashlee Pollard
University of West Georgia

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Reviewed by Ashlee Pollard
University of West Georgia

University-community engagement seeks to create a better reality for all involved by pursuing the goals of reciprocal relationships, collaborative visions, and community empowerment. To get there, one must build a supportive culture, mitigate risk, and navigate knowledge gaps that potentially pose a threat to these partnerships. With such lofty goals, one may ask who is responsible for achieving them and how to go about doing so. *Leadership Training in University-Community Engagement*, available in print or as an e-book, provides valuable insight into an increasingly critical topic within the confines of higher education and university-community partnerships. The training book's three modules—complete with learning objectives, activities, and visual aids—and editor Ching Mey See's accessible writing style work to engage all readers regardless of experience level. To quote See, "Community engagement that is participatory, accountable and transparent is more likely to result in optimal outcomes for both communities and project advocates" (p. 15). See has succeeded in providing scholarship that educates readers on ways to achieve effective community engagement.

In Module I, See proficiently introduces readers to novice concepts and explains academic verbiage associated with university-community engagement (UCE). Module 1 delivers guidance oriented toward several learning outcomes. After reading this section of the text, readers are able to explain concepts, categories, and levels of UCE; to articulate a framework for application; and to identify solutions for possible challenges of community engagement. See asserts that we live in a knowledge-based society in which the university plays a profound role in community development and transformation. The introduction communicates—in a succinct and powerful manner—the importance of leveraging university-community partnerships to improve not only the holistic alliance but also the citizen. See highlights higher education institutions (HEIs)

in Malaysia as examples of "catalysts for positive community development," (p. 15) and she offers their best practices as global, sound methods in a true spirit of partnership. For example, the author shares Universiti Sains Malaysia's UCE framework and describes its "ultimate goal" of being a "synchronized whole working to transmute lives and transform societies for a better future" (p. 25) to empower readers to replicate the university's key principles. The routines, governances, and responsibilities See describes illuminate ways to sustain partner engagement.

The author's ability to transcend her own lived experience and offer numerous guidelines that help readers relate to her content is a strength of the book as a whole and of Module I in particular. See contends that community can be viewed through three lenses: culture, organization, or geographical. A contextual understanding of university-community partnerships can benefit numerous stakeholders and advance societal matters as well. See robustly explains the direct and indirect consequences of these partnerships and how the partnerships can facilitate a common good for all. Since Module I is a true overview of UCE, the holistic picture of scholarship that the text has provided thus far, including the small differences of opinions presented, represents a strength. For example, the text presents the Carnegie University five-category model perspective of UCE alongside the Loyola University focus-area perspective, both of which include distinct recommendations for research, teaching, and service. While this reviewer personally appreciated the text's visual representations of the themes discussed, an introduction to or summary of the graphics would have been appreciated as well. If not following the modules line by line, a reader could easily find themselves among two pages of illustrations about engagement-level increases without understanding their intention fully. Still, the graphics were well constructed in their balance of delivering key facts and elaborating only when necessary.

Module I could have been improved by a deeper discussion of the challenges mentioned at the end of the section, which would have helped readers better situate themselves within the coming units. The text mentions capacity constraints as well as "cultural differences, power dynamics, unexpected negative outcomes, lack of volunteerism, and sustainability issues" (p. 30) as barriers; however, these challenges are all presented within one paragraph that quickly leads into the conclusion of Module I. Nonetheless, whether readers look at university-community partnerships as an investment or a responsibility, the text provides numerous motivations and frameworks to achieve desired outcomes. A concluding activity asks readers to consider the future of UCE and propose strategies to keep engaged partnerships sustainable.

In Module II, readers will learn about the implementation rationale of volunteerism frameworks, expand their knowledge of benefits gained in partnerships, and develop a commitment to furthering initiatives. HEIs "are eminently placed to promote engagement that addresses community needs from a critical and insightful perspective" (p. 37). See's mission of knowledge diffusion could have been more thoroughly articulated here and thus represents a missed opportunity. For example, the "snapshot illustration" (p. 46) of Malaysia's historical evolution with volunteerism lacks an introduction and seems hurried. Additionally, given that leadership is such a key aspect of engaged scholarship, the material delivered in Module II about the leader role specifically leaves readers wanting more. Characteristics of good leadership could have been significantly expanded upon, as it is key to viable partnerships. Ultimately though, content broken up and personalized according to each relevant stakeholder—HEIs, the general public, industry, and government players—is a strength of this module. From staff to students to the nation, Module II powerfully asserts that everyone wishing to be involved has a role to play in university-community partnerships.

See's text integrates the perspectives of a number of other scholars, and these additional resources are well integrated and moving. See uses their work to advance arguments about the value of university-community partnerships, explaining that "despite the various definitions and conceptualizations [of] community engagement, the underlying noble intentions [remain] similar, that is to reach out to the community and make a positive and meaningful change in their lives" (p. 18). Further, the text introduces the concept of volunteerism, or "the action of spending time to take part in an activity/project voluntarily without expecting any form of reward," (p. 45) empowering readers to acknowledge the contribution of human capital in keeping partnerships alive. See's empathetic tone will encourage readers to picture their role within the goodwill equation and, with the help of a motivational activity, carry them into the next unit.

For those feeling daunted about how to implement community engagement as a strategic initiative, Module III is reason alone to consider See's work a must-read. As engagement is translated into practice, "active consultation with the community leaders and relevant stakeholders is very important" (p. 58). Towards this end, See explains the roles of practical considerations such as funding, established timelines, methodology, and transparency within university-community partnerships. Module III's only weakness is its lack of a summation of the work as a whole in an otherwise commanding conclusion section; however, the book should sufficiently empower readers to take action on their own without a final closing argument. Module III enumerates the benefits of implementation, explains the role that assessment plays in design success, and, most important for the hands-on learner, details numerous case studies of initiatives accomplished in Malaysia.

The need for UCE is a global effort, and the strategies presented in See's case studies can easily span international contexts. Readers learn how to "protect and advocate," (p. 57) match projects with resources, and become experts in factors for critical success. The final module guides participants through the steps necessary to transform a desire into practice. Whether one's strengths lie in needs assessment, methodology, design, or delivery, community-engagement partnerships have a place for all. The case studies at the end of the book, each introduced by five thought-provoking discussion questions, guide readers to consider how to replicate the book's recommended best practices in their own contexts. Ranging in focus from participatory research empowering communities to action plans aimed at equity and access, the varied case studies represent hope for an engaged future of university-community partnerships.

See's work advocates for learning from one another and building international UCE best practices to deliver systematic and sustainable

partnerships. This training book is fundamentally relevant to current times and will benefit readers as a standalone source or in tandem with other pieces of scholarship. Community engagement is an important priority for mindfully increasing capacity in partnerships and within society. See tackles the history, risks, and challenges of university-community partnerships with action items, guided reflection, and encouragement. Whether the reader is a novice or an expert, there is something to be learned from *Leadership Training in University-Community Engagement*.