

## Motivation for Faculty Community Engagement: Learning from Exemplars

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### Abstract

This explorative study examines the motivations of sixty-eight faculty exemplars in community engagement. Analysis of personal narrative essays reveals a great diversity in personal and professional motivation, including but not limited to the desire to teach well, personal commitments to specific issues, neighborhoods, and people, a perceived fit between community engagement and disciplinary goals, and a desire for meaningful collaboration. This study reports the first phase in a multiphase study and finds that faculty exemplars have a rich reservoir of motivations that are both intrinsic and extrinsic, rooted in personal goals and identity as well as some organizational cultures. Findings suggest motivation for community engagement likely varies by type of engagement and depth of involvement over time.

### Introduction

It is old news that faculty involvement in community engagement is undervalued. Much research has examined how reward systems across institutional types, but particularly in doctoral and research universities, undervalue faculty engagement (Colbeck and Michael 2006; Elman and Smock 1985; Furco 2001; Holland 1999; Jaeger and Thornton 2005; O'Meara 2002; Ward 2003). Likewise, it is widely known that community engagement in its many forms (service-learning, community-based research, action research, etc.) is time-consuming if done well, and an activity whose impacts are difficult to measure. Over the last five years, higher education has become increasingly entrepreneurial. Faculty are often encouraged to seek external funding and give priority to partnerships and projects with industries that can pay for private services rather than with nonprofits and grassroots organizations. Many new faculty positions have been structured to omit an engagement or outreach role, with the greatest number of new positions emphasizing teaching (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). Finally, and closely related to each of the disincentives noted above, doctoral education within departments rarely provides future faculty with even "glimpses," much less "portraits," of what engaged scholarship looks like as forms of research, teaching, and outreach. Consequently there are few opportunities for graduate students to learn the knowledge

sets, skills, and orientation specific to engagement within their discipline (*O'Meara forthcoming; Stanton and Wagner 2006*).

Why, then, are so many faculty members, in so many disciplines, visibly embracing community engagement? Why can we find engaged faculty in all disciplines, institutional types, regions of the country, across demographic characteristics and appointment types? What is the nature of the work that draws these scholars in? The purpose of this explorative study is to add to the growing literature on the lives and motivations of engaged scholars. The article describes a first phase in a multiphase exploration of the motivations of exemplars in community engagement. The first phase combines a literature review of recent research and theory on faculty motivations for community engagement with a grounded theory approach to analysis of an initial sample of sixty-eight Ehrlich award nominee essays. A set of seven types of motivations for faculty community engagement that emerge from this analysis are described and serve as the foundation for subsequent research. The central research question that frames the analysis is, What do exemplar engaged faculty describe as the major types of motivations for their work?

The term “engagement” has come to mean many things in higher education. In this study the term *faculty community engagement* refers to work that engages a faculty member’s professional expertise to solve real-world problems in ways that fulfill institutional mission and are public, not proprietary (*Boyer 1990; Bloomfield 2006; Elman and Smock 1985; Lynton 1995*). This work, like all scholarship, involves systematic inquiry, wherein the process and results are open to peer-critique and disseminated (*Hutchings and Shulman 1999*). The term *engagement* is used inclusively to mean forms of service-learning, professional service, community-based research, and applied research that engage professional or academic expertise in partnership with local expertise to address real-world issues (*Driscoll and Lynton 1999; Lynton 1995; Peters et al. 2005*). This can be done through teaching, research, and outreach/extension.

### **Framing Motivation for Faculty Engagement**

Research on faculty motivation for community engagement is embedded in a rich and expansive literature on faculty motivation and behavior more generally (*Austin and Gamson 1983; Blackburn and Lawrence 1995*), academic careers (*Baldwin 1979, 1990; Neumann and Terosky 2003*), academic culture (*Kuh and Whitt 1988*), and faculty reward systems (*Tierney and Bensimon 1996*). Likewise, a small but growing number of scholars have studied faculty motivations

for community engagement specifically (Abes, Jackson, and Jones 2002; Boyte 2004; Colbeck and Michael 2006; Hammond 1994; Jaeger and Thornton 2005; McKay and Rozee 2004; Moore 2006; Neumann and Terosky 2003; O'Meara 2004; Peters et al. 2005).

For this study I utilize an interdisciplinary approach to conceptualizing motivation that is informed by three overlapping theories regarding motivation and learning in faculty work. Motivational systems theory (Ford 1992) assumes motivation is the result of individual goals, beliefs about capabilities, and beliefs about the supportiveness of one's contexts; it has been applied to the study of public scholarship by Colbeck and Michael (2006). This theory of motivation reminds researchers to consider how faculty perceptions of their own goals and skills, environment, and related contexts might influence their behavior.

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In a comprehensive review of the literature on faculty and factors affecting faculty work, Austin and Gamson (1983, 18) noted the differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for faculty. Extrinsic factors focus on the environment and conditions under which work is done; they include reward systems, workload, working conditions, opportunity structures, and policies.

Intrinsic factors, on the other hand, pertain to the nature of faculty work itself, including how the work is done and how it affects the faculty member, the variety of activities involved in the work, the degree to which someone performs the activity from beginning to end, the autonomy the person has in doing the work, the responsibility involved, and the amount of feedback the person receives concerning performance. Likewise Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) found that it is the dynamic interaction between self-knowledge and social knowledge that determines faculty behavior. Self-knowledge refers to self-judged competence and preferred effort to give to a role; social knowledge, to perceived institutional expectation of effort given to a role (Blackburn and Lawrence 1995). Both frameworks remind researchers to look at the dynamic interaction of internal and external sources of motivation.

A third and exciting new way of framing motivation for engagement involves how and why faculty learn in their work. How are faculty motivated toward community engagement by a need

for and orientation toward learning and challenging themselves as scholars and teachers? Anna Neumann's research on the role of learning in faculty members' lives, scholarly identity development, subject matter expertise, and teaching (Neumann 2005, 2006; Neumann and Peterson 1997; Neumann, Terosky, and Schell 2006) is particularly relevant here. Studies of faculty involved in small learning communities around service-learning have routinely reported the incredible personal and professional growth they feel as a result of their involvement. Neumann (2000, 1) observes that faculty professional development opportunities "rarely position individual professors as potential sources of their own professional development, assuming, instead, that development is best done to them." Yet as Lattuca (2005) observes in her studies of interdisciplinary teaching and research (another undervalued faculty activity), learning in faculty work is often self-directed: "Regardless of discipline, faculty described a similar process: They identified a topic they wanted to study, acknowledged they did not have the necessary knowledge or methodological tools for the exploration they wanted to pursue and eventually ascertained how they would go about answering the question they posed" (p. 15). In such a way faculty might be motivated toward engagement by a problem in a discipline or in professional practice that they cannot "solve," at least conceptually, without interaction with partners outside academe. Neumann (2005, 64) also points out that, while "faculty work implies faculty learning . . . talk and thought about learning is vague and insubstantial without taking into account what is being learned." Consequently, it is important to take into consideration what the faculty members are learning from the community engagement experience that is drawing them toward this work.

These three theories on faculty work and motivation provide a context within which to frame extant research and new findings on motivation for engagement.

## **Methods**

There is much precedent for examining exemplars or "exceptional individuals" to learn best practices or to examine the nature of their work. For example, several higher education researchers have explored faculty who focus on excellence in teaching within research cultures (Terosky 2005; Huber 2004). Creamer (1998) has studied the careers and practices of prolific research scholars. Gumpert (2002) studied women scholars responsible for establishing the field of feminist scholarship, observing their roles as "pathfinders and pathfollowers" based on their rejection or acceptance

of local norms. Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999) explored the careers of service-learning “pioneers.” Boyte (2004) profiled academics whose pursuit of public work made them exemplary cases, bucking the trend toward detachment and private pursuits in exchange for work embedded in a public context. Peters and others (2005) explored the public scholarship and careers of faculty in the agricultural sciences in land-grant universities, and Daloz and others (1996) studied the lives of citizens committed to the public good.

It is this tradition of looking at exemplary models for insight that guides this work. In partnership with National Campus Compact, I requested permission from faculty nominated for the national Thomas Ehrlich Faculty Award for Service-Learning between 2001 and 2006 for access to their nomination files. This award is given to one faculty member each year who has (a) excelled in innovative ways in connecting community and public service experiences with academic study, (b) demonstrated scholarship on the pedagogy of service-learning, published community-based action research, or conducted research on the impacts of service-learning on students,

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campuses, or communities, and (c) shown leadership that promoted service-learning and engagement on their campus, in their discipline, and throughout higher education. The president of each Campus Compact institution is encouraged to nominate one person from his or her campus for this award each year. Nomination files include an essay from the faculty member, at least one and in some cases two or three letters of nomination from campus administrators or faculty members, syllabi, and descriptions of service-learning and community-based projects. This article reports on the first phase of this project, in which 2005–2006 faculty nominee personal essays served as the primary data source for document analysis. Supporting letters and syllabi within each nominee file provided additional context.

Each nominee file was analyzed using the constant comparative method of data analysis, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Guided by this method, I read each of the nominee files several times, making notes that identified different types of motivations, and compared the motivations of one nominee to another. I then coded the narrative essays and other documentation using words

and phrases from the nominees that described different types of motivation for community engagement (Merriam 2001). I then refined the language used to describe different types of motivation, trying to create categories of motivation that (a) reflected the extant research and/or could be interpreted using extant research, (b) were exhaustive in holding all available data, (c) were mutually exclusive, even if related to each other, (d) were close in phrasing to what the participants actually said, and (e) were conceptually congruent (Merriam 2001).

Several strategies to ensure trustworthiness were used (Merriam 2001; Yin 2003). First, there were sources of data in each nominee file from not only the nominee, but also a campus president or provost nominator, providing some triangulation of perspective on the faculty member's work. Likewise, supporting documents enriched the ways in which I was able to understand the contexts of the faculty members' work and motivation. Theory triangulation occurred as I relied on multiple perspectives from studies of community engagement, faculty motivation and behavior, and faculty learning to interpret and contextualize the data. I kept the analysis close to the data by providing quotes of participants' own accounts of their motivation for engagement. An audit trail was maintained by keeping detailed records of all nominee files, my notes, and coding throughout the project.

In document analysis, as in other interpretative research, "the search is not for abstract universals arrived at by statistical generalizations from a sample to a population" (Merriam 2001, 130) but for concrete universals arrived at by studying specific cases in great detail. Merriam (2001) points out that while generalization as traditionally defined is not the goal of qualitative research, generalizability as concrete universals can be enhanced through rich, thick description, so that "readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation and hence, whether findings can be transferred" (p. 211). Thus efforts were made through rich description to make the voices of engaged scholars specific enough to be recognizable and relevant to other settings.

The demographics of the files examined are as follows. I examined 53 of the 90 Ehrlich award nominations for 2005 and 15 of the 55 for 2006 (the number of nominations decreased from 2005 to 2006 when the system went purely online). Among the 68 total 2005 and 2006 files examined, 42 were women, 26 were men, and disciplines across the humanities (30%), social sciences (20%), natural sciences (10%), and professional schools (40%) were represented.

There were several limitations to this research design. First, the criteria for nominations were clearly laid out for campuses, and the vetting process in which each campus could nominate only one engaged scholar suggests that the samples are indeed distinctive. My review of nominee files and experience working with faculty affirm the distinctive nature of the nominees' work. However, it is possible that in a given year a particular nominee could have been chosen for political reasons rather than for being the most "exemplar" engaged scholar from that campus. Likewise, there was no additional rating of nominees in the sample to distinguish against a set of exemplary engaged practices, something planned for the next phase of this study. The findings should thus be contextualized as relevant primarily to other faculty whose work might be similarly nominated for a community engagement award. Second, the files include materials written for different purposes and for different audiences. For example, the files include syllabi written for students, letters written by college presidents for the award committee to praise the work of the nominee, and the essays by the nominees explaining their work. Each of these has its own writing style and purpose. Third, none of the materials in the files were written to specifically answer the research question posed here concerning types of motivation for community engagement; rather, these materials were intended to tell the overall story of an individual's engagement work throughout his or her career. An attempt was made to mitigate the limitations of different sources by relying primarily on nominee conceptualizations of their own work as the principal source. Fourth, while nominees are often involved in more than one form of community engagement, the Ehrlich award tends to attract faculty most involved in service-learning. Faculty may be motivated toward service-learning for different reasons from those providing motivation toward community-based research or other forms of engagement. Finally, personal essays are self-reported data and are reflective, considering past accomplishments. There is likely some halo effect as nominees remember their beginnings nostalgically and slant their writing for the audience of an awards committee.

On the other hand, the data represented here is recent, and the diversity of types of writing products written to and from multiple stakeholders encourages some triangulation in sources. In addition, there is an established process for vetting these faculty as exemplar engaged scholars. Given that each nomination file is in itself a "story" or form of "narrative" regarding each engaged

**Table 1**

Type of motivation	Prevalence in Ehrlich files	Connection to extant literature
I. To facilitate student learning and growth	94%	Relates to <i>individual goals</i> (Colbeck & Michael 2006; Ford 1992), <i>intrinsic motivation</i> (Austin & Gamson 1983)
II. To achieve disciplinary goals	53%	Relates to <i>individual goals</i> that a faculty member may be socialized toward within a discipline; <i>social knowledge</i> of expectations of a discipline (Blackburn & Lawrence 1995)
III. Personal commitments to specific social issues, places, and people	50%	Relates to <i>individual goals</i> , <i>intrinsic motivation</i> , <i>self-knowledge</i> (Blackburn & Lawrence), and perhaps also <i>what can be learned</i> from partnership (Neumann 2000)
IV. Personal/ professional identity	60%	Relates to <i>self-knowledge</i> , <i>individual goals</i> , <i>intrinsic motivation</i>
V. Pursuit of rigorous scholarship and learning	44%	Relates to the concept of <i>self-directed learning</i> and <i>what can be learned</i> , <i>individual goals</i> , and <i>intrinsic motivation</i>
VI. A desire for collaboration, relationships, partners, and public-making	47%	Relates to <i>individual goals</i> , <i>intrinsic motivation</i> , <i>self-knowledge</i> and <i>social knowledge</i> , and <i>what can be learned</i> from partnership
VII. Institutional type and mission, appointment type, and/or an enabling reward system and culture for community engagement	50%	Relates to <i>beliefs about the supportiveness of one's contexts</i> (Colbeck & Michael 2006; Ford 1992), <i>extrinsic rewards</i> , <i>social knowledge</i>

Note: In the third column, the concept is cited the first time it is mentioned and not after.

Each of the concepts is described more fully in the literature review and in the following citations: Austin and Gamson 1983; Blackburn and Lawrence 1995; Colbeck and Michael 2006; Ford 1992; Neumann 2005.

faculty member's work, the exploratory examination of these files for the theme of motivation was deemed appropriate.

## **Motivations for Engagement**

In this section I describe seven types of motivation for faculty engagement. Each type of motivation is introduced with a discussion of its presence or absence in previous studies, followed by exploration of the extent and characteristics of this motivation found in the Ehrlich files. Table 1 illustrates each of the motivations, their prevalence in this sample of Ehrlich files, and their relationship to the theories presented earlier.

*I. Motivation to facilitate student learning and growth.* Research suggests that a primary reason faculty are motivated to become involved in service-learning is their belief that it will increase student understanding of course material and enhance student development (Abes, Jackson, and Jones 2002; Bringle, Hatcher, and Games 1997; Hammond 1994; McKay and Rozee 2004). Faculty may

want to help students learn specific knowledge, develop certain sets of skills, or become socialized toward a set of civic or moral values. Some faculty conceptualize their community engagement as a way to improve the process of education, whether through active-learning methods, experiential methods, or a constructivist teaching approach (Hesser 1995). Alternatively, research shows that faculty are deterred from involvement in service-learning if they perceive a lack of evidence it will help them to achieve their teaching goals. When faculty see evidence that their learning goals are being met through continuous assessment, they are more likely to stay involved from semester to semester in community engagement (Abes, Jackson, and Jones 2002; Bringle, Hatcher, and Games 1997; Hammond 1994; McKay and Rozee 2004). The desire to teach well may also be externally motivated by a reward system, but in this context it is primarily a “personal goal” that the faculty member uses engagement to achieve (Colbeck and Michael 2006).

Within the Ehrlich files examined, 94 percent noted motivations to teach well and facilitate learning. The nominees were enthusiastic advocates of service-learning as a pedagogy for deepening understanding of content in “real-world settings,” enhancing critical thinking, career development, and the development of civic consciousness. One nominee explained, “civic engagement generates passionate intellectual inquiry,” and another said, “watching my students learn and grow through this approach is what keeps me personally centered as a teacher. I finally feel I am reaching my goal as a civic educator.” Another stated, “I help my students explore their own value system through service-learning in economics, business, accounting and information systems.” Many nominees spoke of being hooked on service-learning by reflection journal entries of their students. One nominee said she was trying to “provide students a theoretical knowledge base, but also to devise innovative and creative ways to instill in university students a notion of moral and civic responsibility toward those they would be teaching.” An architect nominee explained, “as an architect educator it is my pedagogical intent to cultivate a critical eye in my students.” The personal satisfaction these faculty felt from watching their students grow was embedded in all of these comments but perhaps none as much as the following two: “nothing compares to the income I receive watching interns mature professionally and personally as they engage in community experiences and I get to grow too—every year, every class, with every student.” An artist nominee said, “The students begin to see how the service work informs their art, and how the evolving development of their

art, in this context, reciprocally informs the community. I have been doing this work for over 30 years and am still awed by the transformation that occurs within the students and their community.” Therefore the majority of Ehrlich nominees conceptualized their community engagement as closely linked to their desire to engender student learning.

*II. Motivation grounded in the perceived fit between the discipline and the engagement.* Extant research tells us what most directors of service-learning on campuses know in practice: faculty members’ perception of the fit between their discipline and engagement will influence their involvement. Abes, Jackson, and Jones (2002) observed that perceived fit was a major motivator or deterrent in their survey study of faculty involvement in service-learning. Antonio, Astin, and Cress (2000) found through national survey data that faculty in the life sciences and social sciences were more likely than faculty in the physical sciences and humanities to be involved with service and committed to improving communities. Colbeck and Michael (2006) observe that epistemology and different disciplinary approaches are likely a significant predictor of faculty involvement in engagement (Becher 1989; Colbeck and Michael 2006; McAfee 2000).

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*“[C]ommunity engagement acted as a vehicle to accomplish disciplinary goals.”*

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Within the Ehrlich files examined, 53 percent noted motivations for their community engagement work related to their discipline. Within their essays, these nominees narratively located themselves within their disciplines and explained how community engagement acted as a vehicle to accomplish disciplinary goals. Nominees prefaced descriptions of their community engagement with “as a professor of political science” or “as a professor of sociology.” Discipline was apparent in how nominees explained what they did and why. For example, one nominee said, “for me architecture and service are inseparable, architects are responsible for the larger environment and society.” An engineer explained, “we wanted to demonstrate [that] the role of a structural engineer is linked to serving society.” Another nominee in communications explained why engagement was natural for his discipline: “what distinguishes professional Communication from other fields in the discipline of English such as literature is the fact that its practitioners study language use in workplace settings. We teach a process—how to communicate effectively. As such what we do requires a

broad understanding not only of writing but also of the contexts of writing and its impact on people.” These nominees were motivated by a desire to transmit knowledge and develop skills and values critical to their discipline.

*III. Motivation grounded in personal commitments to specific social issues, people, and places.* Boyte’s (2004) exploration of public scholars found many motivated by personal commitments to social justice or specific social issues. Seth Pollack’s (1999) examination of the origins of some of the early pioneers of the service-learning movement classified the motivations of the group in three categories—a desire for social justice, a desire to be engaged in democratic education, and a desire to utilize education in service to society. Likewise, in Moore’s (2006) study of faculty engagement using portraiture method, engaged faculty described conscious commitments to social justice, their local community, and some combination of both as influencing their engagement with communities.

Within the Ehrlich files examined, 50 percent noted motivations for their service-learning and engagement related to conscious personal commitments to either campus partners or social issues. Nominees mentioned commitments to the environment, public health care, public education, and urban planning. But perhaps even more interesting were the ways Ehrlich nominees located their motivation in specific neighborhoods and working with specific community organizers. They described these contexts and people and what they had come to mean to them over time. Included in these commitments was a sense of changing university and college “spaces” to become more democratic, socially just, and transformative. For example, one nominee said, “My purpose as an educator is to make the arts and humanities central to the democratic transformation of higher education and community life.” A college president noted of one nominee, “it was passion for justice and democracy rooted in her experiences in her homeland of South Africa during and after the official end of apartheid that drove her engaged scholarship and commitment to the community.” The nominee agrees, explaining, “I decided we needed to start processes of reform right in our own backyards. The practice of cultural diversity, tolerance and racial reconciliation would begin inside the walls of our classrooms.” A third nominee noted, “as a student of the work of John Dewey I am committed to learner-centered education grounded in the aims of deepening democratic practices.” Thus half of the nominees found motivation and satisfaction for their work in these very concrete commitments to people and places that had developed over time.

*IV. Motivation grounded in personal/professional identity.* This category represents two types of motivation through identity, and involved 60 percent of Ehrlich nominees. First, there were nominees who expressed motivation related to their personal identity and experience (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, disability) and its relationship to community engagement. This type of motivation has been described in the literature previously in terms of how autobiography influences faculty work-lives. While we know many studies have shown women and faculty of color overrepresented in the group of faculty involved in community engagement (Antonio et al. 2000, O'Meara 2002), we know less about why and whether faculty in different disciplines relate their motivations for engagement more or less to their identity. Colbeck and Michael (2006) observed that prior professional experience is likely to influence faculty engagement. Exploring faculty members' decisions to focus on civic engagement, Boyte (2004) found that influences included personal and professional experiences with homes where activism was supported, participation in service-learning as a faculty member and/or as a student, and reading books related to social justice. Neumann and Peterson's work (1997) emphasizes the impact of autobiography on faculty work-lives across faculty roles.

Within the Ehrlich files examined, many faculty explained their engagement through writing about their identity and experience. One nominee explained, "as a Latina scholar whose work focuses on the Latino experience in the U.S., I have been acutely aware of the extent to which knowledge of Latino/a contributions to the country's social and cultural fabric is often missing from public historical memory." Another nominee said, "as a child community service was always a part of my life. My mother prepared meals for families who had lost loved ones. She was always the neighborhood chairperson for fundraisers. The activities were many and varied and my brother and I were always involved in the process." The nominee goes on to explain she later volunteered in a local prosecutors' office and "these past experiences convinced me service-learning was a valuable part of the educational process." As previously mentioned, one nominee explained her present engagement as closely tied to her South African identity and experience, and another nominee noted, "As a child of civil rights activists in the 1970s I learned that responsible people take thoughtful and caring action to bring about changes in the world. They make things happen." Thus community engagement was for some faculty a way of being in the world and intimately connected to identity.

A second kind of identity influence emerged mainly from the Ehrlich nominees themselves, rather than from the literature I

reviewed prior to analyzing the files. Some faculty members started service-learning early in their careers. They were successful enough at it that they had become known professionally in almost every way—on and off their campuses—for service-learning and engagement. Their motivation was partially the result of a sort of synergy of success, wherein they described having tried service-learning and found it successful. Then they were asked to do trainings on service-learning and they were well-received and so they kept on going. Such nominees made opening comments in their essays such as “the service-learning movement in higher education and I are roughly contemporaries” and “service is a hallmark of my career.” One faculty member was noted as the “energizer bunny of service-learning on her campus” by virtue of having been involved in every step of her institution’s service-learning development. To ask these scholars “why engagement?” or why they were “motivated” toward it at this point in their careers was like asking why they were still working. It was what they did and who they were now, professionally and personally.

*V. Motivation grounded in a pursuit of rigorous scholarship and learning.* Previous research has found that some faculty involved in community engagement believe strongly that what they are doing is cutting-edge for their discipline and for professional communities outside their institution (Boyte 2004; O’Meara 2002; Peters et al. 2005). They are motivated in part by a desire to be on the “frontiers” of their discipline. Boyte (1999) found faculty exemplars were those who see “public engagement, increasingly, not as an aside or secondary form of research but rather as a wellspring of intellectual discovery” (p. 29). Likewise, the research of Peters and others (2005) on community engagement in land-grant universities found three interrelated explanations for why and how their case scholars chose to become involved in public work. Peters and others (2005) observed:

We find that their motivation for becoming engaged in public work as scholars is grounded in their judgment that engagement is more than a vehicle for transferring or disseminating the results of their scholarship. They see it as offering a means of informing and conducting it as well. (p. 405)

In fact, Peters and others found that engagement in public work offered a “powerful and in some ways irreplaceable means for facilitating learning and providing knowledge” (p. 408). Alternatively, belief that community engagement is not rigorous, cannot be peer-

evaluated, and is less important than work more squarely in the center of the discipline negatively influences motivation (*Hammond 1994; O'Meara 2002*). Strand and others (*2003*) and Chang (*2000*) note faculty concerns about rigor as potential demotivators.

Within the Ehrlich files examined, 44 percent noted their motivations for their service-learning and engagement related to the scholarly nature of the work and their desire for learning. Nominees that mentioned this motivation were particularly eloquent. One explained, "The most powerful domain of knowledge-making is the shuttle-zone which for the public scholar—including students, faculty and community partners—can be imagined as a ferry making its way back and forth between two banks of a river moving people, things, languages, ideas." Another nominee described how she and her students were "co-producers of music knowledge" in community settings, while another nominee noted he and his art students learned through their scholarship together how "service work informs their art and how the evolving development of their art, in this context reciprocally informs the community." These nominees were excited by the potential of this form of scholarship and learning.

Creamer and Lattuca (*2005, 14*) observe that in "interdisciplinary collaborations faculty may be more aware of the learning because they cannot take much for granted; their collaborations do not necessarily share the same knowledge base, methodological training or predilections, or even the same assumptions about knowledge itself." Likewise, given the complex and new environments many faculty find themselves in when they become involved in community work, engaged faculty may find themselves more aware of what they didn't know coming into the work and what they are learning "mid-flight." One nominee noted, "I am a passionate advocate of learning" and went on to explain how much she learned as an oral historian through her students' work. Another nominee noted, "my experience with service-learning can best be characterized by epiphany and evolution. I am growing in insight and conviction." Finally, another nominee said, "Using the community as a classroom intensively and regularly has excited and opened me—as well as my students and colleagues to new methodologies and new understandings. I have learned a lot."

*VI. Motivation grounded in a desire for collaboration, relationships, partners, and public-making.* Several studies have shown that faculty may be first motivated to service-learning or engagement by their colleagues, students, and staff and the collegiality and positive feedback they experience being involved in an engagement

project with specific groups of people. In one case study of an engaged institution, Bloomgarden and O'Meara (2007) found one faculty member was involved in service-learning because the "good teachers" on campus had created a sort of service-learning brown-bag and she wanted to be part of that "in-group" of good teachers. Likewise, Abes, Jackson, and Jones (2002) found faculty motivated toward engagement because students or other faculty encouraged their participation. Likewise, when faculty hear success stories and receive encouragement from colleagues whom they respect, they are more likely to continue their engagement, as they believe it will be likely to help them teach more effectively (Abes, Jackson, and Jones 2002; Gelmon et al. 2001).

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The desire for partners is not limited to campus. Academic work can be isolating. Peters and others (2005) observe that an important contribution public scholars help to make through their engagement is the important task of "public-making," that is, of forming and creating publics. David Matthews (1999, 1) observes a "public is a diverse body of citizens joined together in ever changing alliances to make choices about how to advance their common well-being." Previous research suggests the desire to collaborate with

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colleagues and to find people who will engage with you in your work may be a catalyst, whether those partners are in or outside academe, within or across disciplines. This "searching for partners" and "conversations" is another explanatory framework for motivation for engagement (Peters et al. 2005).

Among the Ehrlich nominees, 47 percent said that they were driven by their desire for partnerships, community, and relationships. Whereas previous literature focused on encouragement from partners, many of the nominees took motivation from the encouragement they gave others. Nominees heavily involved in institutionalizing service-learning on their campus and nationally noted how grateful they were professionally to have had the opportunity to "lead these efforts" and create community in such a way on their campus. One nominee noted she was motivated by seeing other faculty use her reflection tools or methods to study similar issues.

Off campus, faculty were motivated by the feeling of solidarity they found with their partners. One nominee noted, "I make

common cause with partners locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.” Another observed, “I have found a community of like-minded scholars and a language about the kinds of work I was doing.” Unexpectedly, I did not find a consciousness about interdisciplinarity in community engagement.

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*“One nominee noted she was motivated by seeing other faculty use her reflection tools or methods to study similar issues.”*

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Rather, nominees emphasized working with colleagues on campuses to get them involved in service-learning, and finding common ground with community partners. This is an area to be further explored in the next phase of this study.

*VII. Motivation as grounded in institutional type and mission, appointment type, and/or an enabling reward*

*system and culture for community engagement.* Strong preexisting service missions at the institutional level favorably influence faculty engagement (Holland 1999; O’Meara 2002; Ward 2003). Pioneering work has been done in this area by Scott Peters and colleagues (2005) showing that faculty in some land-grants consider their identity as faculty in a land-grant institution to be a major motivator for their involvement. With some this involvement is organized as a portion of their positions, but for others it is how they conceive of their entire career.

A lack of recognition in the reward system is often noted as a deterrent for faculty engagement (Ward 2003; O’Meara 2002). Stanton (1991) observes that some institutions provide more facilitative environments for service-learning by supporting problem-oriented, applied, and interdisciplinary curricula, whereas at institutions where research and learning are considered separate from public service, it is harder for faculty to become involved.

Within the Ehrlich files examined, 50 percent noted motivations for their service-learning and engagement related to institutional type and mission. Nominees contextualized their work in relationship to their mission; many mentioned Catholic or land-grant missions. For example, one nominee explained his work in the context of his institution: “the mission statement of \_\_\_ encourages social justice and the idea of good work in the community.” Another explained their work “as a faculty member at a land-grant university.” Yet another explained she was motivated to attempt to “integrate the urban mission into the university’s academic agenda.” Several nominees were from institutions well known for having made service-learning a major part of their institutional

identity, and faculty from those institutions seemed to have been part of and socialized into seeing their work as part of their institutional mission. One nominee noted, “I am fortunate to work in an institution that values this pedagogy highly.” Another said, “I work in an organization that has increasingly encouraged, supported and rewarded community-based service-learning. This is rooted in our mission and the ideals of our founders.”

Some nominees noted motivation flowed from the nature of their appointments, which fell into several categories. Some were given an explicit mandate as part of their position (i.e., were appointed faculty liaison for service-learning or associate provost for outreach), some were in institutions that were clearly making a push in this area and rewarding engagement, and some were hired from the very beginning with an understanding of their engagement role.

### **Discussion and Implications**

Analysis of the Ehrlich award nominee files revealed seven categories of motivation. The intent was to provide a rich description of these different types of motivation and consider how they related to extant research and theory on faculty motivation and community engagement. In terms of the relationship between the categories that emerged and extant research, table 1 illustrates many connections. Specifically, elements of intrinsic motivation (*Austin and Gamson 1983*), individual goals (*Colbeck and Michael 2006; Ford 1992*), and self-knowledge (*Blackburn and Lawrence 1995*) were prevalent in the seven types of motivations found in the Ehrlich award nominee files. While 50 percent of Ehrlich nominees did feel that a supportive organizational culture or appointment structure was supporting their work, faculty described more types of motivations that had to do with their own sense of personal and career goals.

However, the categories that emerged were complex and often highly interrelated. For example, while nominees were more likely to discuss their love of teaching as a personal motivation and goal, if they also mentioned elsewhere in their essay that they had a supportive culture for their work, it is likely that this supportive context had nurtured this individual goal. There was often overlap between the category of motivation based on personal commitments to social issues and the category of perceived fit of discipline. A faculty member may have been trying to contribute to the end of global warming as a social issue but through a framework and set of goals specific to environmental studies. Likewise, some

nominees explained their community engagement as a function of their public role as a scholar in a discipline, but teaching goals and disciplinary goals were mixed together. For many faculty members, the desire to teach well and the desire for relationship and community in their work came from a similar place. Thus, further work needs to be done to tease apart the seven categories developed here and then to look at relationships between them. The second stage of this project, which involves qualitative interviews with a select group of nominees and analysis of an additional one hundred nominee essays, will provide new territory for exploring the prevalence of these categories and relationships between them.

One conclusion of this exploratory study of faculty exemplars in community engagement, however, is that the existing research and literature on faculty motivation is both instructive and incomplete in categorizing and understanding faculty motivation for engagement. While research on faculty work and behavior overall is extremely helpful in categorizing types of motivation (e.g., extrinsic/intrinsic), much of the research on which it was based did

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*“[W]e need to be open to hearing motivations in the stories of exemplar engaged scholars that do not fit into preexisting categories in the faculty work-life literature.”*

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not include community engagement work as it is practiced today, and the nature of the work itself is very different from traditional teaching and research. It involves becoming a part of neighborhoods and making reciprocal commitments to community organizers and organizations in different ways that have their own potential pulls and draws. Thus we need to be open to hearing motivations in the stories of exemplar engaged scholars that do not fit into

preexisting categories in the faculty work-life literature.

While not an explicit focus of this study, analysis of these nominee files also suggests that faculty motivations for community engagement change throughout a career and involvement in the work itself. Research on career stage and human development is particularly helpful here in considering a continuum of motivations for engagement and how they may change over time (Neumann 2005). For example, involvement in a service-learning class might lead to community-based research, which might lead to greater involvement and partnership. As the involvement changes, so might the motivations. This type of analysis might be particularly helpful to directors of service-learning trying to understand

what types of support attract faculty and what types of support sustain their community involvement. They will likely be different.

Likewise, within the files different motivations were evident for different types of community engagement, particularly service-learning or community-based research. Thus further research directed at ascertaining motivations needs to more carefully examine the types of community engagement faculty are talking about. The term “community engagement” is a big tent.

In conclusion, the study of exemplars in community engagement can help us understand the motivations that pull faculty toward this important work and sustain them in it. Extant research on faculty motivation is helpful in conceptualizing the different types of motivations that faculty experience, but it must be complemented by new research that focuses specifically on the work and careers of engaged scholars, which have their own distinctive sets of motivations and satisfactions.

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