Creating a New Kind of University: Institutionalizing Community-University Engagement.

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Creating a New Kind of University: Institutionalizing Community-University Engagement. Stephen L. Percy, Nancy L. Zimpher, and Mary Jane Brukardt., eds. Bolton, MA: Anker, 2006. 288 pp. ISBN: 1-882982-88-6. $39.95

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Creating a New Kind of University, a collection of fifteen essays that variously address the promise and pitfalls behind the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's (UWM) efforts to institutionalize community partnerships, builds on the work of Ernest Boyer, the Kellogg Commission, and others who have called on American colleges and universities to renew their mission to serve the community. But rather than issuing yet another clarion call to university intellectuals to integrate scholarship, teaching, and service, the contributors to *Creating a New Kind of University* discuss the collective work necessary to build and sustain meaningful community partnerships.

The different writers in this volume, who speak from a wide range of institutional positions both within and beyond UWM, argue that service learning, outreach, and other community efforts are necessary if colleges and universities hope to convince students, parents, and state officials of the relevance of higher education. Thus the issue for American colleges and universities is not *whether* to engage with the community beyond the campus gates, but *how* to create long-term partnerships that benefit both the community and the campus. As the editors proclaim in the first essay of the collection, for engagement to succeed in the long term it must "move beyond experimentation to institutionalization" (5). Taken as a whole, *Creating a New Kind of University* portrays the collective action members of the UWM community took to work toward this goal.

The majority of the collection focuses on the efforts of faculty, administrators, and community leaders at UWM to realize "The Milwaukee Idea," a wide-sweeping initiative proposed by Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher in 1998 designed to transform UWM into a truly engaged university. The Milwaukee Idea may best be described as a collection of preexisting and newly created institutionalized university-community projects that focus on economic, educational, and environmental issues important to both the

university and the Milwaukee area. Some of the projects discussed in the book include the Cultures and Communities Program, an undergraduate certificate program that combines a focus on multiculturalism with experiential learning and service, and The Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management, a community-initiated interdisciplinary center that offers credit and noncredit courses that support the development and infrastructure of local nonprofits. (For more on these programs see the essays by Rita Hartung Cheng, Gregory Jay, and Sandra E. Jones in the collection.) What separates The Milwaukee Idea from community-oriented programs at other institutions, though, is coordination. Rather than being a loose conglomeration of independently run projects, each university-community partnership is coordinated by a Deans' Council, an interdisciplinary committee made up of deans representing the schools whose faculty contribute to the community project. A Trustee Council made up of faculty, deans, and Milwaukee Idea administrative staff oversees community projects generally.

The first section of the book describes The Milwaukee Idea in depth and examines what lessons it may teach other colleges and universities. What is perhaps most valuable about this section of the book is its honest appraisal of the project and its effect on the identity of the university and its members. For instance, Jon F. Wergin, who writes about a case study he conducted examining the impact of The Milwaukee Idea, concludes that the program had more of an impact outside the university than inside. "Some on campus worked—and thought about their work—differently," he writes, "but most of those closely associated with The Milwaukee Idea [. . .] were already active in community engagement of one form or other" (39). The collection is divided into four additional sections that broadly address

- ✓ How potential obstacles such as faculty governance and continuing education programs may contribute to engagement initiatives
- ✓ How engagement alters the shape of teaching and scholarship
- ✓ How engagement is accomplished in specific university-community programs directed toward education reform and nonprofit management
- ✓ How engagement can survive and become a more integral part of American higher education.

One thread that runs throughout the diverse range of essays, though, is that authors write from their experiences and positions as university presidents, provosts, program directors, teachers, and administrators.

This first-hand perspective makes the collection a valuable resource for administrators, faculty members, and campus leaders who seek to create similarly formalized community initiatives. Besides providing a glimpse into the kind of coordination necessary to sustain university-community partnerships, the book offers useful information regarding funding opportunities. For example, former Housing and Urban Development (HUD) official Armand W. Carriere discusses the financial support, as well as strategies for receiving such support, available through the Office of University Partnerships, a HUD program designed to foster connections between urban universities and the community.

Creating a New Kind of University also implicitly participates in the recent debate among some scholars in composition studies concerning the merit of institutionalized

service learning programs. Most recently, Paula Mathieu has argued that institutional-ized service programs impose objectives that are oftentimes at odds with those in the community. As she puts it, "The very advantages of institutionalized service learn-ing—measurable success, broad institutional presence, and sustainability—create a generic set of needs and priorities that make it difficult to respond to communities' needs and ideas" (98). *Creating a New Kind of University* offers a different perspective on this argument and, in addition, raises questions about the place of engagement in graduate education. Percy, Zimpher, and Brukardt acknowledge "a growing recogni-tion […] that engagement must become part of graduate training across disciplines if it is to be truly institutionalized and more broadly adopted" (17). They, along with other contributors, leave the issue of engagement and graduate education unsettled, thus making the collection a provocative book to include, alongside Mathieu's, in a graduate-level course examining theories of service learning and their impact on un-dergraduate and graduate education.

Another question the collection leaves open is the role community partners play in the institutionalization of university-community partnerships. Contributors frequently cite the importance of avoiding top-down models of governance that discount the roles played by community members; despite this, the collection does not contain any essays written by community leaders. In her chapter, "UWM Community Conversations," Deborah Fagan presents findings based on informal interviews with campus partners whose views are prominently cited in the chapter. While these interviews yield insights into community members' perceptions of UWM's efforts, the relative lack of voices from the community raises important questions about the impact of The Milwaukee Idea beyond the university.

The editors stress that the book should not be taken as a blueprint for how uni-versities can become engaged because UWM is itself not yet fully engaged—nor are the challenges faced by UWM and Milwaukee necessarily applicable to other urban universities and communities. Nonetheless, *Creating a New Kind of University* presents those within the academy with tested organizational strategies for creating potential long-term partnerships of lasting benefit to the university and the community.

Works Cited

Mathieu, Paula. *Tactics of Hope: The Public Turn in English Composition*, Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2005.