

**UCLA Social Sciences Division**  
**Guidelines for Evaluating Community-Engaged Scholarship**  
**In Academic Personnel Review**  
**Adopted by Division of Social Sciences Chairs, May 2, 2023**

**Prepared by**  
**Division of Social Sciences Working Group on Community-Engaged Scholarship<sup>1</sup>**  
**with assistance from**  
**Center for Community Engagement**  
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**Community-Engaged Scholarship Engagement Defined:**

“Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.” [Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement Framework](#) (2022).

**Background:**

In AY 2021-22, the Council on Academic Personnel recognized the importance of establishing criteria to evaluate excellence and impact of community-engaged scholarship. In doing so, CAP communicated that it understood that community-engaged scholarship in diverse fields will be expressed a diverse range of work products in relation to diverse public partners. For this reason, CAP invited deans to organize faculty working groups to establish criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship applicable to their particular school/division. As Dean of the Division of Social Sciences, Darnell Hunt received the support of the division’s department chairs to undertake this effort in Spring 2022 and subsequently appointed this working group.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to establish transparent criteria within the Division of Social Sciences so that community-engaged scholars know how their work will be evaluated and that departmental peers, the dean, and the Council on Academic Personnel will have a common frame of reference for rigorously evaluating community-engaged research and teaching when it appears in faculty dossiers for academic personnel review.

**Rationale:**

While it is central to the mission of UCLA to engage with and serve the people and communities of California and beyond, there are structural barriers in the academic personnel review process

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<sup>1</sup> Working group members include: Maylei Blackwell, Jennifer Chun, Jason De Leon, Tobias Higbie, Gaye Theresa Johnson, Vinay Lal, Helga Leitner, Michael Lofchie, Shannon Speed, and Till Von Wachter.

that inhibit and disincentivize faculty from pursuing community-engaged research and teaching in their scholarly work. Community-engaged scholarship has not been fully recognized and rewarded as valid scholarship in the review of faculty dossiers for tenure and promotion. This is in part because academic peers have viewed community-engaged work as not conforming to scholarly standards and in part because they have not known how to evaluate this work.

Community-engaged scholarship also intersects with UCLA's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in critically important ways. Women and faculty of color, while committed to scholarship in its own terms, are more likely to enter academia with an interest in connecting their scholarship with societal issues and pursuing community-engaged scholarship (Miller et al. 2018). Tenure and promotion policies that recognize the legitimacy of community-engaged scholarship and provide strategies to evaluate the scholarly output and impact of this work contribute to greater hiring, retention, and advancement of women and people of color in the faculty ranks (Antonio, 2002; Miller et al. 2018).

For the purposes of this document, we are using the overarching term of "community-engaged scholarship." We recognize that different fields have different terminology for this kind of work. There are both distinctions and overlap among the many terms across different fields as they relate to knowledge production processes, outputs, engagement, and peers (e.g., co-productive process, community partner peers, non-traditional scholarly products, etc.). There is also a continuum of activities, from outreach, public engagement, critical engagement, public scholarship, public impact scholarship, community-engaged scholarship and activist research. Current faculty evaluation standards are insufficient to encompass the variety and depth of scholarship that is taking place at UCLA.

Many fields in the social sciences have historically been extractive from the people and communities they study. Moreover, numerous social science disciplines were founded and created concurrently with conquest and colonialist practices. In this context, the very exercise of community-engaged scholarship is an admission of humility, critical engagement, and accountability. In fact, the imaginaries, epistemologies, movement leaders, and community scholars of marginalized communities have shaped significant intellectual traditions across the social science disciplines. It is incumbent upon us to recognize that experts, as faculty are called, are not always that and their expertise is not sufficient. There are knowledge holders, knowledge keepers, and knowledge(s) within communities and systems that the academy does not adequately recognize. The academy does not have the monopoly on knowledge. The knowledge produced through community engagement and collaboration can be better than "traditional" research.

In our knowledge production as social scientists, we are accountable to those we are producing scholarship about, our community partners, academic peers and disciplines, and institutions. Practice precedes theory. We work in and with different systems of knowledge production and transmission, including academic, community-based, and indigenous. For some, activist research is a particularly important category of community-engaged scholarship. As UCLA faculty member Shannon Speed noted in her 2006 article<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> Speed, S. (2006). At the Crossroads of Human Rights and Anthropology: Toward a Critically Engaged Activist

I argue that the critical engagement brought about by activist research is both necessary and productive. Such research can contribute to transforming the discipline by addressing the politics of knowledge production and working to decolonize our research process. Rather than seeking to avoid or resolve the tensions inherent in anthropological research on human rights, activist research draws them to the fore, making them a productive part of the process. Finally, activist research allows us to merge cultural critique with political action to produce knowledge that is empirically grounded, theoretically valuable, and ethically viable.

By activist research, I mean the overt commitment to an engagement with our research subjects that is directed toward a shared political goal. These two undertakings are distinct and often are carried out separately. However, what I want to argue—and the reason I use the term critically engaged activist research—is that the two can be productively practiced together, as part of one undertaking. This does not mean that the multiple tensions and contradictions that exist between them cease to exist, but, instead, that these are productive tensions that we might strive to benefit from analytically, rather than seeking to avoid.

Collaboration in the research process is a form of accountability to the people. There have been cases where researchers have published what is essentially community knowledge and claim full credit for it. Ethical research practice is core to community-engaged scholarship. There needs to be an ethic of accountability, reciprocity, and non-extraction. Community-engaged scholarship engages power differentials and does not pretend these power differentials do not exist.

These criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship are an opportunity to change what it means to be a scholar in relation to the communities we “study.” Many departments in the social sciences exist because of community politics and knowledge. This is the history of the intellectual project of the public university. To undertake community-engaged scholarship means to embed oneself in these relationships and to build long-term relationships to create trust with people and communities beyond the university.

Because community-engagement has not been valued in the past, scholars who have been doing this work have had to shoe-horn it into their visible practice, in effect carrying a double burden of “regular scholarship” and community-engaged scholarship. Because community-engaged scholarship has typically been categorized as “service,” faculty have not necessarily documented their practices as assiduously as these following criteria for evaluation envision. We look to the Center for Community Engagement to provide 1) guidance if faculty want to consult about mapping their existing community-engaged research practices onto these guidelines, and 2), professional development opportunities for those faculty who do not now undertake community-engaged research but who would like to explore it now that it will count for tenure and promotion.

### Characteristics of community-engaged scholarship<sup>3</sup>

Community-engaged scholarship has several attributes that typically distinguish it from traditional academic “monograph” form of scholarship:

1. Products are often disseminated in both traditional disciplinary outlets and non-traditional venues, as reflected in Janke, Medlin & Holland’s spectrum of scholarly products, or mosaic of scholarship (p. 10).<sup>4</sup>
2. The work is often multi/inter-disciplinary.
3. Scholarly products often include multiple co-authors, including community partners who contribute to the work in significant ways.
4. The work often integrates research, teaching, and service in ways that makes it difficult to compartmentalize into one single category.
5. The work requires significant relationship-building with external partners to maximize its quality and impact.

### Criteria and indicators for evaluating community-engaged scholarship

We recommend the following as the criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship, mindful of the variation in contexts, the breadth of faculty work, and departmental promotion and tenure guidelines. We note that these *criteria* are meant to be enabling for community-engaged faculty, not onerous. The indicators are intended to be expansive and inclusive so that faculty dossiers can be prepared and read with appropriate context. Faculty would not be expected to meet all the indicators in each area.

Criteria	Indicators
<b>1. Clear Academic &amp; Community Change Goals</b>  Objectives defined  Clear purpose and focus of inquiry	<i>The scholar provides evidence of clear goals such as—</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly stating the basic purpose of the work and its value for the discipline(s) AND the public good</li><li>• Documenting the alignment between the scholarship and the scholar’s role, departmental</li></ul>

<sup>3</sup> These assessment criteria draw heavily from the University of Minnesota -Twin Cities: [Assessment of Community-Engaged Scholarship](#). As the University of Minnesota document also notes, we gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health for its work in originally developing the review criteria. The CCPH work appeared in: Jordan C (Editor), *Community-Engaged Scholarship Review, Promotion & Tenure Package. Peer Review Workgroup*, Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative, Community- Campus Partnerships for Health, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Janke, E., Medlin, K. & Holland, B., [Excellence in community engagement and community-engaged scholarship: honoring the mosaic of talents and stewarding the standards of high quality community-engaged scholarship](#). Institute for Community and Economic Engagement. The University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 2014.

	<p>priorities, and university mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining goals and objectives that are realistic and achievable</li> <li>• Identifying significant intellectual questions in the discipline AND for the community/external stakeholders with whom the scholar is partnered</li> <li>• Articulating a coherent program of research and objectives</li> <li>• Articulating goals for teaching and student learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Adequate Preparation in Content Area and Grounding in the Community</b></p> <p>Preparation and knowledge about developments in the field of study and relevant community context</p>	<p><i>The scholar provides evidence of adequate preparation and grounding in community partnerships such as—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing time and effort in developing reciprocal and mutual relationships with community partnerships</li> <li>• Bringing necessary skills to the collaboration</li> <li>• Participating in training and professional development that builds skills and competencies in community-engaged scholarship</li> <li>• Demonstrating an understanding of relevant existing scholarship and the work is intellectually compelling</li> <li>• Understanding the norms and expectations of high-quality collaboration and partnership</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Appropriate Methods: Rigor and Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Rigor is evident in research design, data collection, interpretation, and reporting of results.</p>	<p><i>The scholar provides evidence of scholarly rigor informed/enriched by engagement such as—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refining a research question, or confirming its validity, through collaboration or co-generation with</li> </ul>

<p>Rigor is maintained, or even enhanced, through community-engaged approaches.</p>	<p>community/external partner(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Using methods appropriate to the goals, questions, and context of the work and provides rationale for election of methods</li> <li>● Modifying procedures in response to changing circumstances</li> <li>● Engaging the community/external partner as a partner/collaborator(s) in developing and/or improving the study design, the collection/analysis/interpretation of data, and/or the recruitment and retention of study participants</li> <li>● Developing policy recommendations and application/intervention ideas, based on study findings, in collaboration with external partners</li> <li>● Extending and broadening the dissemination of study findings through partnership with community members and organizations</li> <li>● Enhancing curriculum by incorporating updated and real-world information from community members critical to student learning of course material</li> <li>● Deepening and contextualizing the learning experience in a course by involving community experts in design and implementation</li> <li>● Revising curriculum and community placement with community partner based on student feedback and community partner observation</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Significant Results: Impact on the Discipline/Field and the Community</b></p> <p>Beneficial impact in the communities in which the scholarship is conducted. Development of ongoing and reciprocal relationships with community partners is a</p>	<p><i>The scholar provides evidence of significant results/impact such as—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Achieving the intended or notable goals, impact, or change consistent with the purpose and target of the work over a period of</li> </ul>

<p>concrete impact.</p> <p>Assessment of knowledge created (in field, discipline, community).</p>	<p>time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contributing to new knowledge in the field/discipline through publication in peer-reviewed journals, other scholarly outlets, and other non-traditional forms</li> <li>● Contributing to and benefiting the community/ external partner</li> <li>● Making progress towards social equity and/or systemic change that promote the public good</li> <li>● Securing increased funding for additional research, program implementation, and/or community partners</li> <li>● Increasing capacity of community members/organizations to advocate for themselves</li> <li>● Adding consequentially to the discipline on issues that matter to the external partners and the community</li> <li>● Opening up additional areas for further exploration, inquiry, and/or collaboration</li> <li>● Ability of the work, in various venues or formats, to stimulate intellectual conversation that advances the discipline or field</li> <li>● Ability of the work, in various venues and formats relevant for the community partners, to stimulate conversation within a community or general public</li> <li>● Advancing knowledge/understanding for the community in which the work is situated, and discussing its generalizability/transferability to other populations or as a model that can be further investigated in other settings</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Effective Presentation and Communication to Academic and</b></p>	<p><i>The scholar provides evidence of effective presentation and dissemination such as—</i></p>

<p><b>Community Audiences</b></p> <p>Scholars effectively communicate with appropriate audiences and subject their ideas to independent review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicating with/disseminating to appropriate academic and public audiences consistent with the mission of the institution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Publishing research results or teaching innovations in peer-reviewed, practitioner, professional journals, and other non-traditional forms/venues</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Using appropriate forums and presenting information and materials in forms that community stakeholders and external partners find accessible and understandable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disseminating information through media used/read by community members</li> <li>○ Producing documents directed towards service providers, policy makers, or legislators</li> <li>○ Creating and inspiring new conversations (e.g., write-ups, references, etc.) in BOTH public and academic spheres</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Communicating outcomes of community engaged work in collaboration with community/external partners</li> <li>● Presenting information with clarity and integrity</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Reflective Critique: Lessons Learned to Improve the Scholarship and Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Reflective critique of community partnerships. Evaluation of partnership successes and failures.</p>	<p><b><i>The scholar provides evidence of reflective critique such as—</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Critically evaluating the work with appropriate evidence</li> <li>● Seeking evaluations from community members and using those evaluations to learn from and direct future work</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Changing project/course design or line of inquiry based on feedback and lessons learned</li> <li>● Being involved in a local, state, national, or international dialogue related to the work</li> <li>● Engaging in personal reflection concerning, for example, issues of privilege or racism</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Collaborative Leadership and Personal Contribution</b></p> <p>The scholar’s work has earned a reputation for rigor, impact, relevance, and the capacity to advance the discipline or community agenda.</p>	<p><i>The scholar provides evidence of leadership and personal contribution such as—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describing how the work has been recognized, used, or built on by academic peers</li> <li>● Describing how the work has been recognized, used, or built upon by community members, practitioners, professionals in the field, and external experts, including positively impacting the university’s relationship with community and stakeholder groups</li> <li>● Providing comments or reviews (solicited/unsolicited, formal/informal) from academic and non-academic colleagues, peers, and experts</li> <li>● Receiving awards or letters of appreciation from community-based organizations for contributions to the community</li> <li>● Receiving invitations to present to professional society meetings and conferences, to present to community audiences, to testify before legislative bodies, to appear in the media, or to serve on advisory or policymaking committees</li> <li>● Mentoring students, early career faculty, and community partners</li> </ul>

## **8. Socially and Ethically Responsible Conduct of Research and Teaching**

The work is conducted with honesty and integrity.

Scholar's work is conducted in a way that fosters respectful relationships with students, community participants, external partners, and peers.

*The scholar provides evidence of consistently ethical behavior such as—*

- Socially responsible conduct of research, teaching, and outreach in writings, discourse, approach to scholarship, and nature of collaboration. Cultivating the conduct of "good science", sound research techniques, creativity, and appropriate engaged pedagogies that result in meaningful and beneficial contributions to communities
- Following the human subjects review process and all other policies concerning the responsible conduct of research when conducting research projects, and specifically subjecting work to a community IRB or a university IRB committee focused on community-based research
- Approaching communities as mutual partners to foster trusting, equitable relationships
- Engaging communities in a respectful manner
- Recognizing and valuing community knowledge systems and incorporating them into the research process and courses as appropriate
- Appropriately involving community/external partners in writing and reviewing products and acknowledging their work