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Faculty Executive Committee

Date: July 2, 2025

To: Jia-Ming Liu, Associate Dean for Academic Personnel, Samueli Engineering

From: Mekonnen Gebremichael, FEC Chair, Samueli Engineering

Subject: Recommendation on Community-Engaged Scholarship Review

Dear Associate Dean Liu,

Following your request on October 10, 2024, to develop discipline-specific guidelines for the evaluation of community-engaged scholarship, I formed a taskforce composed of faculty representatives from various departments within the school. The taskforce was charged with developing engineering-specific guidance that aligns with the CAP Guidance on Community-Engaged Scholarship**.**

The taskforce conducted its work during Winter and Spring 2025, holding multiple meetings and reviewing relevant materials, including the CAP guidance, documents from the National Science Foundation, and a report from UCLA's Division of Social Sciences. These materials are included in the appendix of the attached report.

Please find enclosed the report prepared by the taskforce. The key findings and recommendations are summarized as follows:

- Faculty candidates engaging in community-engaged scholarship should be encouraged (but not required) to include a statement in their dossier addressing how their work reflects the core elements of such scholarship. In preparing this statement, faculty may refer to the desirable elements outlined in Appendices 2 and 3. Candidates may also include a list of suggested external peer reviewers who are well-positioned to evaluate the impact and rigor of their work.

- Recognizing the diverse forms and goals of community engagement across disciplines, departments are encouraged to define the particular characteristics of community-engaged scholarship within their field and identify any discipline-specific benchmarks they believe are relevant.

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- As noted in the campus guidance, community-engaged scholarship is not a requirement, and no additional documentation is mandated. Faculty whose work does not involve this type of scholarship are not expected to modify their dossier in response to these recommendations.

Taskforce Members:
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TO:	Associate Dean Jiaming Liu, Samueli Engineering
FROM:	Taskforce on Community-Engaged Scholarship
	Mekonnen Gebremichael (Chair), Jane Chang, Rajit Gadh, Subi Iyer,
	Jennifer Jay, Aaswath Raman
RE:	Recommendation on Community-Engaged Scholarship Review

The taskforce reviewed the charge, Council on Academic Personnel (CAP) guidelines on community-engaged scholarship (Appendix 1), a related NSF guideline (Appendix 2), and the UCLA Department of Social Science's Guidelines for Evaluating Community Engaged Scholarship in Academic Personnel Review (Appendix 3). CAP's defines community engaged scholarship broadly (Appendix 1), so much of the field of engineering would be characterized as community-engaged, as the discipline itself is by definition targeted toward solving societal problems. Thus, any professor engaging in community engaged work (including with businesses or work toward patents) can include a statement, if they wish, on the relevance of their work to various communities. National Science Foundation uses a narrower definition of community engaged scholarship, which can differ from traditional academic scholarship sufficiently enough to require an understanding among review committee members of the nature and specific challenges of this work. UCLA Department of Social Science's Guidelines provides two tables that describe the characteristics of community-engaged scholarship that differ from traditional academic research. Based on these, the taskforce made a preliminary recommendation that the school encourages faculty who are engaged in community-engaged scholarship to provide a statement in their dossier for evaluation that addresses how their engaged research includes the core elements.

The candidate can potentially include a list of recommended external peer reviewers that can speak to this aspect of their work. A faculty member's community-engaged scholarship will be holistically assessed based on the existing criteria under the CALL and APM (teaching, research and creative work, professional competence and activities, university and public service), with the aim of defining the candidate's merit in light of such criteria as originality, scope, richness, and depth of engagement. However, for faculty choosing to partner with entities at the community level (non-profits and groups of community members), there are desirable elements of work done in partnership with communities that the faculty and review committees should be aware of (see Appendix 2 and the full NSF Report).

We emphasize that participation in community-engaged scholarship is **not a requirement** for UCLA faculty in any sense. There is **no required documentation** of engagement with communities, defined broadly or narrowly.

We recognize that the role of community-engaged work with non-academic and/or non-scientist partners within engineering disciplines is often nascent and evolving in its scope and activities. Moreover, it may take very distinct forms across our departments and for each faculty member. **The taskforce thus welcomes each department to outline the particular characteristics of their discipline's community-engaged scholarship and specific benchmarks they believe would be relevant.**

Appendix 1: CAP Guidance: Community-Engaged Scholarship [Ref. 1]

Community-engaged scholarship includes research or scholarship conducted in partnership with non-academic organizations and community scholars and practitioners. Such partnerships create opportunities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources that make a positive contribution to both our university and to the public good and align well with our university's mission. This type of research is sometimes conducted outside the standard framework of peer-reviewed scholarship and can involve components that may not produce conventional interim milestones or traditional final products. The **Council on Academic Personnel recognizes that community-engaged scholarship involves collaborations with many different bodies, including non-profit organizations as well business and community partners, ones that may encompass translational research, commercialization activities, and patents. Such research may be funded by non-profit organizations, community organizations, foundations, government agencies, industries, business enterprises, or trade associations.**

Community-engaged scholarship takes a variety of forms. Some examples include:
- Research or inquiry that generates knowledge, or applies existing knowledge, to address practical problems and impacts on communities and the environment.
- Research that leads to the establishment of companies or patents, since innovation and entrepreneurship are important for the translation of new knowledge generated by academic entities to the public.
- Activities that involve the creation of literary works, the fine arts, performances, other expressions from creative disciplines or fields that are produced in collaboration with a public (non-university) entity or group.

To assist various review committees in their assessments, candidates for personnel actions and their departments are encouraged to include information that can provide contexts for, and insights into, the intellectual significance of their community-engaged research or scholarship. Information on related contributions to teaching, service and EDI efforts, where appropriate, would also assist the university's review process.

Types of information from external reviewers may include the following:
- Characteristics of community partners and their value in the community sphere, and the nature of the partnership.
- Indications of the quality of the research or scholarship. Such indications will differ by field of study, but could include information on the selectivity and reputation of venues of publication, exhibition, or performance; types of external funding; awards; mentions of the significance of the work in public documents/venues; influence of the findings in policy or practice change at the level of the organization/s or at the broader local, regional or national levels; how the developing body of knowledge is making a significant difference in shaping the direction of the field or community practice.

- Ways in which findings from the research were disseminated more broadly, such as in peer-reviewed publications; project reports; newsletters; websites; seminars; professional meetings; public performances; trainings; and online forums and other

digital media. Information on the reach of non-traditional dissemination modes (such as non-peer reviewed publications) would also be welcomed.

External reviews are often solicited in the academic review process. In the case of faculty members who conduct community-engaged scholarship, departments are encouraged to solicit input from individuals, at peer-level academic institutions, who have the expertise to assess community-engaged scholarship. In addition, it may be appropriate to solicit external reviews from individuals who are not from institutions of higher education. Non-academic institutions could include government entities, foundations, community organizations, and private businesses, among others. Departments are encouraged to provide general guidance to non-academic reviewers regarding areas in which their input would be valuable. Examples include the type of collaboration; the value of the collaboration to the organization; the ways in which the products of the collaboration have enhanced policy, practice or other goals of the organization; and the value or impact of the products for the broader community or society, beyond the particular entity or entities involved in the collaboration.

Appendix 2: National Science Foundation (2022) Engaged Research for Environmental Grand Challenges: Accelerating Discovery and Innovation for Societal Impacts

The full report is listed in [Ref. 2]. The following information might be of help:

The National Science Foundation has defined engaged scholarship as: "**Engaged research is research conducted via meaningful collaboration among scientist and non-scientist actors, that explicitly recognizes that scientific expertise alone is not always sufficient to pose effective research questions, enable new discoveries, and rapidly translate scientific discoveries to address society's grand challenges.**" **The benefits of community-engaged scholarship include enhancing relevance, broadening participation, and advancements in discovery**.

Four principles have been defined as best practices for community engaged scholarship:

The following is sourced from (1):

• Context-based: The project is situated in a particular context, place, or issue.

• Goal-oriented: Goals are clearly defined, shared across participants, relevant to the problem.

• Pluralistic: Multiple ways of knowing and doing are recognized and accommodated.

• Interactive: Ongoing learning and frequent interactions are designed into the project plan.

Faculty conducting community engaged research in engineering should consider the following table from the National Science Foundation in planning from their engaged work.

Box 3. Six core elements to organize thinking around engaged research design.	
Key Element	**Questions for Researchers**
Rationale	Why is engaged research suitable or necessary for the challenge at hand? How might conventional research tackle the same question? How will engaged modes address core knowledge gaps or provide opportunities for innovation? Will engagement support translation or accelerate use? Will the research design provide intrinsic opportunities for broadening participation?
Context-specific design	What is the specific location where the project is situated? What is the envisioned action arena? Is the action arena appropriate to the problem? How do the planned modes of engagement match the scale of the participants? Is the arena formalized around informing specific decisions? Is the scale of the arena, geographically or jurisdictionally, well matched to the problem space and the solution space? Do the spatial spheres of influence of the participants align with the problem? Are the modes of engagement suited to the scale?
Goal orientation	Is the overall goal co-developed with key partners? Does the project have clear goals and timelines? What will tangible outputs be? Has there been discussion of who owns research products? Who will disseminate them? Do key partners see sufficient value to commit resources, including time and attention, to the project?
Participation	Are all relevant stakeholders engaged? Are the roles and responsibilities of research participants clearly defined? Who plays a convening role? Who may be left out? Are the values, priorities and goals of all partners known or surfaced, including how they intersect with each other? What are some anticipated power dynamics among the partners? How can process design address these dynamics and avoid unintended consequences or undue pressure on participants?
Engagement process	Are the modalities of interaction clear to all participants? Is there an MOU or other documentation that clarifies the relationships and processes of engagement? Are processes in place to meet the needs of all participants, including providing compensation, childcare for evening meetings, or other specific needs to facilitate participation of different groups?
Appraisal	How will outcomes be evaluated? Will processes, procedures, and tangible outputs be appraised continuously throughout the project? Is there a shared vision for success? How will undesirable trade-offs be avoided? How are outcomes to be evaluated by partners?

Appendix 3 UCLA Department of Social Science's Guidelines for Evaluating Community Engaged Scholarship in Academic Personnel Review

Table 1. Characteristics of community-engaged scholarship that distinguish it from traditional academic "monograph" form of scholarship [Ref. 3]

1	Products are often disseminated in both traditional disciplinary outlets and non-traditional venues. [Ref. 4]
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.

Review committees should be aware of the specific challenges that may be present with non-academic or non-scientist partners at the community level so that they can account for the extra effort required to overcome these challenges when evaluating professors, particularly junior faculty. The building of relationships with non-scientist partners can require a great deal of time and cultural fluency. Sustained, open communication and time spent with community members may be required to overcome potential mistrust of academia that has in some cases developed due to historically extractive relationships.

Table 2 presents a list of best practices that scholars can refer to while striving for the highest quality of community-engaged scholarship. Following each best practice is not a requirement or expectation.[3]

Criteria	Indicators. *The scholar provides evidence of consistently ethical behavior such as—*
1. Clear Academic & Community Change Goals Objectives defined Clear purpose and focus of inquiry	• Clearly stating the basic purpose of the work and its value for the discipline(s) AND the public good • Documenting the alignment between the scholarship and the scholar's role, departmental priorities, and university mission • Defining goals and objectives that are realistic and achievable • Identifying significant intellectual questions in the discipline AND for the community/external stakeholders with whom the scholar is partnered • Articulating a coherent program of research and objectives • Articulating goals for teaching and student learning

2. Adequate Preparation in Content Area and Grounding in the Community Preparation and knowledge about developments in the field of study and relevant community context, priorities, and university mission	• Investing time and effort in developing reciprocal and mutual relationships with community partnerships • Bringing necessary skills to the collaboration • Participating in training and professional development that builds skills and competencies in community-engaged scholarship • Demonstrating an understanding of relevant existing scholarship and the work is intellectually compelling • Understanding the norms and expectations of high-quality collaboration and partnership
3. Appropriate Methods: Rigor and Community Engagement	• Refining a research question, or confirming its validity, through collaboration or co-generation with community/external partner(s) • Using methods appropriate to the goals, questions, and context of the work and provides rationale for election of methods • Modifying procedures in response to changing circumstances • 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 • Developing policy recommendations and application/intervention ideas, based on study findings, in collaboration with external partners • Extending and broadening the dissemination of study findings through partnership with community members and organizations • Enhancing curriculum by incorporating updated and real-world information from community members critical to student learning of course material • Deepening and contextualizing the learning experience in a course by involving community experts in design and implementation • Revising curriculum and community placement with community partner based on student feedback and community partner observation
4. Significant Results: Impact on the Discipline/Field	• Achieving the intended or notable goals, impact, or change consistent with the purpose and target of the work over a period of time

and the Community	• Contributing to new knowledge in the field/discipline through publication in peer-reviewed journals, other scholarly outlets, and other non- traditional forms • Contributing to and benefiting the community/ external partner • Making progress towards social equity and/or systemic change that promote the public good • Securing increased funding for additional research, program implementation, and/or community partners • Increasing capacity of community members/organizations to advocate for themselves • Adding consequentially to the discipline on issues that matter to the external partners and the community • Opening up additional areas for further exploration, inquiry, and/or collaboration • Ability of the work, in various venues or formats, to stimulate intellectual conversation that advances the discipline or field • Ability of the work, in various venues and formats relevant for the community partners, to stimulate conversation within a community or general public • 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
5. Effective Presentation and Communication to Academic and Community Audiences	• Communicating with/disseminating to appropriate academic and public audiences consistent with the mission of the institution • Publishing research results or teaching innovations in peer-reviewed, practitioner, professional journals, and other non-traditional forms/venues • Using appropriate forums and presenting information and materials in forms that community stakeholders and external partners find accessible and understandable • Disseminating information through media used/read by community members • Producing documents directed towards service providers, policy makers, or legislators • Creating and inspiring new conversations (e.g., write-ups, references, etc.) in BOTH public and academic spheres • Communicating outcomes of community engaged work in collaboration with community/external partners • Presenting information with clarity and integrity

6. Reflective Critique: Lessons Learned to Improve the Scholarship and Community Engagement	• Critically evaluating the work with appropriate evidence • Seeking evaluations from community members and using those evaluations to learn from and direct future work • Changing project/course design or line of inquiry based on feedback and lessons learned • Being involved in a local, state, national, or international dialogue related to the work • Engaging in personal reflection concerning, for example, issues of privilege or racism
7. Collaborative Leadership and Personal Contribution	• Describing how the work has been recognized, used, or built on by academic peers • 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 • Providing comments or reviews (solicited/unsolicited, formal/informal) from academic and non-academic colleagues, peers, and experts • Receiving awards or letters of appreciation from community-based organizations for contributions to the community • 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 • Mentoring students, early career faculty, and community partners
8. Socially and Ethically Responsible Conduct of Research and Teaching	• 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

References:

Reference 1: CAP Guidance: Community-Engaged Scholarship | Academic Senate

Reference 2: National Science Foundation (2022) Engaged Research for Environmental Grand Challenges: Accelerating Discovery and Innovation for Societal Impacts

Reference 3: 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.

Reference 4: 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.