WE'RE TALKING ABOUT PROCESS: THE PRIMACY OF RELATIONSHIP AND EPISTEMOLOGY IN DEFINING COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP IN PROMOTION AND TENURE POLICY

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Abstract

This study examines how community-engaged scholarship (CES) was defined and described in promotion and tenure policies at a university. Examining 67 policies across university, school, and department levels, findings show meaningful variability with regards to whether and how CES was defined or described. Analysis categorizes descriptions of CES as outputs, outcomes, and/or processes. We highlight the insufficiency of policies that name but do not describe CES and address the importance of fully describing the core values of CES in policy text. We discuss the importance of process, particularly as it relates to relationships and epistemology, as a definitional characteristic, and the importance of continuing to explicate the interconnectivity and distinctions between CES and diversity, equity, inclusion, and epistemic justice.

Introduction

To effectively change institutional culture in higher education to support community-engaged scholarship (CES) as legitimate and valued faculty work, it is essential that CES is articulated in promotion and tenure policies accurately and equitably (Jordan et al., 2009; O'Meara, 2005). Effecting policy change is challenging, and for those institutions that have attempted to do so, each has navigated unique paths to articulating the ways in which CES is defined, valued, and evaluated (Janke et al., 2016; Pelco & Howard, 2016; Wendling & Besing, 2018). CES continues to be termed in many different ways within the same institutions due to institutional and disciplinary contexts (Blanchard & Furco, 2021; Janke et al., 2023). Despite these differences, however, there remain "standards and values" that define CES: participatory practices, reciprocity, co-construction, democratic practices, shared authority, and shared resources (pp. 34–35).

Community engagement is not only an approach to scholarship but, to many scholars, it is a way of knowing (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011), raising epistemological questions such as: "What is knowledge? How is knowledge assessed? What constitutes valid knowledge? How do we know what we know?" (Rendón, 2009, pp. 66–67). As

an asset-based approach, CES validates the knowledge assets of individuals outside the academy. From a transdisciplinary stance, knowledge assets transcend disciplines and the academic institution such that academic knowledge and community-based knowledge are brought together to generate new knowledge (Gibbons et al., 1994).

From an epistemological perspective, knowledge is also linked to identity and justice in that questions are raised about epistemic marginalization and exclusion (Fricker, 2007; Settles et al., 2021). For many community-engaged scholars, community engagement is rooted in inclusivity, equity, and social justice and is a scholarly identity tied to one's purpose for becoming a scholar; understanding how knowledge is stewarded, generated, and shared; and one's relationship with and in communities (Vogelgesang et al., 2010; Ward, 2010). When knowledge is understood as connected to power, privilege, politics, identity, and positionality, then fairly and accurately recognizing community-engaged scholars and scholarship centers issues of equity in an examination of faculty rewards systems and policy.

The rise of CES in higher education coincides with the rise of a new generation of more diverse scholars who possess commitments not only to long-standing traditions of scholarship but also to emerging forms of scholarship, such as interdisciplinary, digital, and CES (Post et al., 2016). There is considerable evidence that historically underrepresented faculty—faculty of color and women—are more likely than their white and male counterparts to pursue community-engaged forms of scholarship and to view the academic profession as an opportunity to influence social change (Antonio, 2002; Antonio et al., 2000; Baez, 2000; Turner et al., 2008; Vogelgesang et al., 2010). Such scholars are more likely to look for opportunities in CES as they pursue careers in higher education.

Considerable research has been dedicated to understanding faculty rewards systems and advocating for changes that are inclusive of diverse epistemologies and support the full participation of those who identify as engaged and/or public scholars (O'Meara, 2011a, 2011b; Sturm et al., 2011). Researchers have defined CES and distinguished it from related practices such as community-engaged learning and research (da Cruz, 2018) and have identified the characteristics of CES to develop tools for reviewing and measuring it (Calleson et al., 2005; Jordan et al., 2009; Doberneck et al., 2010). As research on and resources for CES have proliferated, a growing number of campuses across the United States have succeeded in changing their promotion and tenure guidelines to reflect and recognize CES (Doberneck, 2016; Janke et al., 2018; O'Meara et al., 2015; Pelco & Howard, 2016; Saltmarsh et al., 2009; Sandmann et al., 2008).

We argue that focused analysis of the policy *text*—and specifically how community engagement is *characterized* by the language incorporated by faculty writers—is an essential but often missing element of research on policy change. Given diverse perspectives of individuals and disciplines about what constitutes CES and its role and reward in faculty work, much can be learned from examination of how policies incorporate key characteristics of this form of scholarship. Further, given the diversity of the faculty scholars who pursue CES, deepened understanding of the intersectional connections among epistemology, community engagement, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is foundational to understanding how interpretations may differentially affect scholars.

This study examines the ways that faculty reward policy revisions and defined CES and public-facing activities within and across 67 promotion and tenure policies at every level (university, school, department) at a single

institution, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). As part of a larger study that examined UNCG's promotion and tenure policies more broadly, this case study examines the ways that CES was described, if not often defined explicitly. A second case study shared in this journal examines the terms that were adopted within the policy across faculty roles (Janke et al., 2023). It provides insight and strategy for individuals involved in change processes to assess policies, as they are revising them, to determine the extent to which they adopt language that inclusively honors the core principles and practices of CES. The codification—the text written into university, school, and department policies—therefore, is a foundational step to later enactments of the policy, as it sets the scene, so to speak, as a precursor to how faculty make sense of and enact the policy. Therefore, this study does not examine the process that led to the revisions within each unit; it does not examine how the revised policies were implemented nor does it explore the impact that the revised policies had on individual faculty promotion and tenure cases. All of these issues are being explored in further studies.

Case Study: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is a four-year, public research institution in a metropolitan area of just under 300,000 residents. It is one of a 17-institution state system, is a high research-activity institution, and has held the elective Community Engagement classification awarded by the Carnegie Foundation since 2008. During the period in which promotion and tenure policies were adapted to recognize CES (approximately 2008–2012), the university was growing in student enrollment as well as in student diversity. Of approximately 18,000 students in 2010, African American students comprised 22.9% and Latinx students comprised 4.5% of the population. By 2020, the populations rose to 29.4% and 11%, respectively, resulting in federal designation as a minority-serving institution (MSI) in 2017 (where students of color constitute at least 25% of total undergraduate enrollment). Of 950 faculty in 2014, 5.3% (16) identified as African American and 3.3% (10) identified as Latinx. This demographic was also increasing in diversity, and by 2020 it had risen to 9.1% (107) and 4.8% (56) of the faculty population, respectively. With 85 undergraduate degrees in over 100 areas of study, as well as 74 master's and 32 doctoral programs, it has a College of Arts and Sciences and a College of Visual and Performing Arts, as well as five professional schools, including Business and Economics, Education, Health and Human Sciences, Nursing, and the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering in collaboration with North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University also located in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Policy Change at UNCG

Faculty efforts to modify promotion and tenure guidelines were part of a larger movement among faculty champions and administrative leaders who were involved in seeking recognition of and reward for CES. In the early

to mid-2000s, a confluence of events, people, and opportunities helped to build significant infrastructure and support for community engagement and CES as an aspect of faculty academic work in particular. As described by one senior member of the faculty, the university

> finds itself at several crossroads—between its history as a teaching institution and its present efforts to increase research activity, between its traditional means of evaluating faculty performance and the increasing faculty whose engage [*sic*] in public research and community engagement, between increasing access to its academic programs through online teaching and other outreach efforts and maintaining the student-centered culture that has distinguished UNCG from other institutions (C. Fairbanks, personal communication, November 24, 2008).

(For a more complete overview of the institutional context that led to policy change see Janke and Shelton [2011].)

The term *community engagement* was selected as the term used in the university policy in recognition of UNCG's recent (2008) Community Engagement Elective Classification conferred by the Carnegie Foundation. However, no definition of the term was developed and written into the university policy. Instead of a definition, community engagement was described across the faculty roles of teaching, research and creative activity, and service, as described in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptions of Community-Engaged Scholarship (CES) in the University Policy by Section

University Policy Section	Description of CES
Teaching	*Community-Engaged Teaching* • Developing and delivering community-based instruction, such as service-learning experiences, on-site courses, clinical experiences, professional internships, and collaborative programs • Developing and delivering off-campus teaching activities such as study-abroad courses and experiences, international instruction, and distance-education courses • Developing and delivering instruction to communities and other constituencies
Research and Creative Activities	*Community-Engaged Research and Creative Activities* • Writing papers for refereed journals and conference proceedings • Creating exhibits in educational and cultural institutions • Disseminating community-engaged research through public programs and events • Conducting and disseminating directed or contracted research • Conducting and reporting program evaluation research or public policy analyses for other institutions and agencies • Developing innovation solutions that address social, economic, or environmental challenges (e.g., inventions, patents, products, services, clinical procedures, and practices)
Service	*Community Engagement (Service)* • Consulting and providing technical assistance and/or services to public and private organizations • Writing position papers for the general public • Collaborating with schools, businesses, advocacy groups, community groups, and civic agencies to develop policies

Clarifying Approved Terms and Definitions after Policy Adoption

Though a definition for CES was not included in the university policy, a supplemental document was developed the year after the policy was approved. The issue of needing definitions was raised at a meeting the provost held in which academic deans were asked to initiate efforts to align school and department policies with the university policy. In that meeting, the deans asked: What is community engagement? How do we assess it? The language drafted into the university policy, while sufficient for getting the policy through, seemed, to the academic deans, to fall short. If they were to lead efforts to support the policy revisions, they needed greater clarity and specificity. This was important not only for draft policy revisions but also to help in subsequent documentation and review of community-engaged scholar dossiers. A "definitions document," therefore, was created by drawing from a range of local and national conversations regarding the meaning of community engagement, scholarship, and CES (Janke & Shelton, 2011). The document provided explicated definitions and descriptions for eight terms. Table 2 provides a sample of the text excerpted from the full document. The full text is available at https://communityengagement.uncg.edu/definitions/.

Research Questions

How do the policies governing promotion and tenure at the unit level (university, school, department) address and frame CES? This was the question that guided our development of a comprehensive study examining the texts of the faculty reward policies. Secondary questions included: How, if at all, were specific terms developed in the university-level policy transferred subsequently into school and department policies? (see Janke et al., 2023); and, the focus of this article, How, if at all, was CES described and defined? What characteristics were used to express conceptions of CES in the policies? To examine descriptions and definitions, we explored each of the three levels of policy (university, school, and department) as well as how, if at all, descriptions and definitions differentiated CES from other forms of public-facing scholarship and activities (e.g., applied, outreach).

Conceptual Framework

Our study is framed by two mutually reinforcing frameworks related to how knowledge is produced and valued. Democratic civic engagement focuses attention on the processes and purpose of community engagement. Epistemic justice focuses on the ethics of knowledge inclusion and exclusion in interrogating how knowledge is produced and shared. Both democratic civic engagement and epistemic justice suggest avenues of inquiry that are grounded in questions of power, privilege, and positionality, examining not only the scholarship that is produced but who it is producing the scholarship.

Table 2
Community Engagement Terms and Definitions Explicated in the Definitions Document

Community Engagement	*Community engagement* (sometimes also referred to as *civic engagement*) is the "collaboration (among) 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." In the context of university documents and policies regarding faculty work, community engagement refers to research/creative activities, teaching, and service activities that are collaboratively undertaken by faculty members with community partners, staff, and/or students through processes that exemplify reciprocal partnerships and public purposes.
Community-Engaged Scholarship	The term *community-engaged scholarship* (sometimes also referred to as the *scholarship of engagement*) refers to research/creative activities, teaching, and service undertaken by faculty members in collaboration with community members (and often students) that embody the characteristics of both *community engagement* (i.e., reciprocal partnerships, public purposes) and *scholarship* (i.e., demonstrates current knowledge of the field/discipline, invites peer collaboration and review, is open to critique, is presented in a form that others can build on, involves inquiry).
Community-Engaged Research/Creative Activity	Community-engaged research and creative activity is the collaborative generation, refinement, conservation, and exchange of reciprocally beneficial and societally relevant knowledge that is generated in collaboration with, communicated to, and validated by peers in academe and the community.
Community-Engaged Teaching	Community-engaged teaching describes those activities that (1) honor principles of community engagement (reciprocal partnerships, public purpose) and (2) provide opportunities for students (both enrolled and not enrolled at UNCG) to collaborate with faculty and community members for the dual—and integrated—purposes of learning and service.
Community-Engaged Service	Community-engaged service describes those activities that (1) honor principles of community engagement (reciprocal partnerships, public purpose) and (2) "enable the University to carry out its mission, contribute to the function and effectiveness of the faculty member's profession and discipline, and reach out to external communities and constituencies, such as government agencies, business, and the arts."
Community Service	Community service describes activities that are provided *to*, intended *for*, or done *in* communities.
Community	The "community" in community engagement is not defined by sector, such as private or public, for profit or nonprofit; rather, community is broadly defined to include individuals, groups, and organizations external to campus that use collaborative processes for the purpose of contributing to the public good.
Reciprocity	Reciprocity is recognizing, respecting, and valuing the knowledge, perspective, and resources that each partner contributes to the collaboration.

Democratic Civic Engagement

Democratic civic engagement (DCE) is grounded in a set of assumptions about knowledge and organizational change, explicitly advancing social justice in a diverse democracy to fulfill the public purposes of higher education (Saltmarsh et al., 2009; Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011). The DCE framework expands our understanding of community engagement from a focus on activity and place to a focus on process and purpose. This shift has implications for how we understand and approach community relationships, knowledge-production, epistemology, the political dimension of engagement, and outcomes. DCE as a project of social justice in a diverse

democracy committed to equity raises questions of power, privilege, politics, positionality, identity, and implication in the work of higher education (Simpson, 2014). When DCE accounts for the epistemic inclusion of CES and the scholars—inside and outside of the academy—who produce it, connecting epistemology with identity, power, and justice (Fricker, 2007), it creates the possibility of what Sturm et al. (2011) call "full participation." A full participation orientation accounts for the institutional architecture necessary for community-engaged scholars to thrive.

The DCE framework was useful to our study, both in the initial theming phase as we developed an understanding of various ways that faculty expressed community engagement as aspects of scholarship in their department, unit, and university-level policies as well as in later analysis that tried to characterize the aspects of CES that were included, or not. The DCE framework served as a common standard for the research team in discussion and assessments of what it means for scholarship to be "community-engaged." Key elements of DCE are:

- *Participatory epistemology:* the cocreation of knowledge that shifts the position of students from knowledge consumers to knowledge producers and shifts community groups from being subjects or spectators of the research process to collaborators in knowledge generation and problem solving.
- *Collaborative research:* recognizing an ecosystem of knowledge and acknowledging that the generation of new knowledge requires that academic knowledge be combined with community-based knowledge, eliminating a hierarchy of knowledge and a one-way flow of knowledge outward from the college or university. Collaboration is not collaborating internally within the college or university but with those outside of it.
- *Transdisciplinarity:* recognizing that interdisciplinary inquiry remains bounded by academic disciplines and that transdisciplinarity is fundamentally different in that it combines multiple disciplinary knowledge within the college or university with knowledge that exists and is generated outside the college or university.
- *Scholarly artifacts as publications:* expanding the understanding and valuing of scholarly products beyond publication in highly specialized disciplinary journals.
- *Nonacademic knowledge experts (peers):* along with a valuing of the knowledge and experience that both academics and nonacademics bring to the processes of education and knowledge production comes the reframing of who is a peer in the peer-review process and the recognition that in certain circumstances the expert will be a noncredentialed, nonacademic collaborator.
- *Impact:* academic impact is conceived as "the advancement of . . . knowledge and activities that contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes" (National Science Foundation, 2023) and is shaped by examining the nature of the system within which knowledge is transformed into public policy or social action and how scholars engage others to transform teaching, learning, and research into actionable and useful knowledge.

The DCE framework is relevant to the analysis of the promotion and tenure policies reviewed for two reasons. First, DCE is aligned to the definition used by the Carnegie Foundation for the Community Engagement Elective Classification and, as such, is widely accepted across the scholarship-of-engagement field. Second, the DCE framework was referenced extensively by individuals supporting institutional change, including the consultants (e.g., Saltmarsh and Clayton) who worked with UNCG to support policy and culture change during this era.

Epistemic Justice

Ideas related to *epistemic exclusion* (Settles et al., 2021) and *epistemic injustice* (Fricker, 2007) deepened and extended our understanding of participatory epistemology (a key element of DCE) to explore how inclusion of students and community partners is necessarily linked to issues of diversity, equity, and justice. Most simply stated, epistemic injustice is the persistent exclusion of one's contribution to knowledge production (Dotson, 2014). Epistemic exclusion is more common for women and faculty of color who are more likely to engage in topics related to marginalized social groups and/or social justice (Diaz & Bergman, 2013), working with individuals and communities to collect primary and "everyday" data (Gonzales, 2018), and using methodologies beyond disciplinary norms (Antonio, 2002). Epistemic exclusion is multidimensional; it entails disciplinary-based (or presumed lack thereof, in the case of partners whose expertise lies beyond the credentials recognized by disciplinary norms and institutional regulations) and identity-based biases as women and underrepresented faculty of color report higher perceptions of scholarly devaluation (Settles et al., 2021). Epistemic exclusion is intersectional; women and faculty of color may be more likely to both be negatively stereotyped (Dotson, 2012, 2014; Settles et al., 2021), and they may be more likely to choose scholarly approaches that are outside of the academic mainstream (Gonzales, 2018). Therefore, analysis explored how community-engagement was conceptualized (through the lens of DCE) and how CES was framed (or not) as legitimate and rewarded as a form of faculty work (through the lenses of epistemic injustice and epistemic exclusion).

Methodology

This study is a textual examination of promotion and tenure policies at a single university. Focusing on a single institution, or case, allows for a deep exploration of the ways that institutional policies were revised during a four-year period (2008–2012) to describe (or not) CES for faculty review and reward. Yin (2003) suggests "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 1). Characteristics of qualitative case study methodology include that it is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 1998). Our examination of policy language focused on how language about CES was incorporated into the policy documents for promotion and tenure.

Critical Discourse Analysis

To ascertain the extent to which CES has been integrated into each unit's tenure and promotion guidelines, we used critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) allowed for exploration of the relationship between policy language and institutional culture. CDA is a useful analytical tool because it takes into consideration that the meaning of discourses are contextual, that social constructs impact the ways texts are constructed and analyzed, and that words and images convey a certain set of underlying assumptions and beliefs. CDA has been described by

Martínez-Alemán (2015) as "a method through which we can expose in text (words or images) the metanarratives of hegemonic structures in society" since CDA both reveals the "ideological foundation of discourse" and "provide[s] evidence (data) necessary to support corrective action" (pp. 21–24). Getting at these underlying assumptions and beliefs was critical to the research team, as it revealed the ways in which descriptions about CES expressed its distinctions from other forms of public-facing work and its legitimacy and value (or not) as scholarship.

As Martínez-Alemán (2015) highlights, there are multiple ways to conduct a CDA as it is informed by many different social science techniques. Common across CDAs is the practice of multiple, iterative readings of text so that researchers conducting the analysis can develop understandings of the text's genre, assess the text's context, and "uncover metanarratives" (p. 27). This is precisely what the research team did when analyzing the promotion and tenure guidelines of each unit. Through multiple readings, the team was able to not only assess the actual location and prevalence of community engagement in each set of guidelines but was also able to assess how, if at all, individual units and the university as a whole express value about CES. This critical inquiry is paramount to our study, as CES and the scholars who practice it are often marginalized in the academy (Post et al., 2016). The ways in which CES is valued in a university setting can be an indicator of the metanarrative of that specific university and whether or not it is inclusive, committed to the public good, and working to enact democratic change in the world. Performing a CDA of the tenure and promotion guidelines at a specific university can help to create a better understanding of how colleges and universities are integrating CES into their identities and ways in which it might be done in a more socially just and inclusive way.

Data Collection

The lead author collected promotion and tenure policies from the university as well as 59 departments across the seven schools. These policies had been modified during the 2010–2012 time period for the purpose of adopting CES into the policy. No repository of all policies could be located; therefore, the lead author emailed and received policies from the provost's office, as well as deans, department chairs, and faculty members who had been present and had copies of the policies in their own files. We also included the "definitions document" in our analysis because it was influential in shaping the school and department policies.

Coding

This study is part of a larger effort to understand the ways in which a single university addressed CES as an aspect of its promotion and tenure policies. As part of the initial process, we used open inductive analysis to identify preliminary themes that could be used to guide the review of the full data set of policies. The themes developed in this exploratory phase were drawn from open coding of policies from six departments.

The research team utilized a matrix to record how, where, and with what emphasis CES had been (or had not been) incorporated into each unit's guidelines. In pairs the research team coded and analyzed each school's guidelines in order to corroborate and clarify findings. Next the team developed codes with definitions (codebook and

data are published in CivicLEADS; see Janke et al., 2022) and then followed the same process to code the policies of 59 departments across the seven schools. In most cases, departments had developed departmental-level promotion and tenure policies. In a few cases, such as in the School of Nursing, some or all departments opted to use the school-level policy in lieu of a department one. Researchers met regularly to cull analyzed data and observations in order to develop an overarching analysis of the university's mandate to integrate CES across individual schools and departments.

Because we were interested to know how CES was articulated in policies, especially because there was no definition explicated in the university policy as described previously, we coded all references to public dimensions of faculty work. By *public dimensions of faculty work* we mean any instance in which the text is describing a person or entity that is beyond the institution, such as nonprofits, businesses, communities, or the public (Alperin et al., 2019). During coding, we used the DCE framework (Saltmarsh et al., 2009) to examine the ways in which the descriptions conceptualized community engagement. The DCE framework draws attention to the many ways in which community engagement can be described, including relationships, knowledge production, epistemology, political dimensions, and outcome.

To explore how, if at all, terms reflected the DCE framework, we asked: Is community engagement named, defined, and/or described? In our next round of coding, we looked for and applied four codes based on the DCE framework, including (1) conceptions of knowledge, (2) products or artifacts, (3) purpose or reach, and (4) relationship. In many instances, a single paragraph or sentence included one or more codes. Finally, after coding all documents through an iterative process, we further refined the four codes into three, which we called *definitional characteristics*: output, outcome, and process. Definitional characteristics are categories of ways that CES was described in the policies (see Table 3).

Data Availability

All data, including the codebook for this study, are available in Janke et al. (2022) via CivicLEADS (Civic Learning, Engagement, and Action Data Sharing). CivicLEADS provides infrastructure for researchers to share and access high-quality data sets, which can be used to study civic education and involvement.

Table 3
Definitional Characteristic Codes

Code Title	Code Definition
Output	Community engagement is described by that which is produced, delivered, or supplied, such as *activities* (e.g., service-learning class, internship, presentation, outreach event) and *artifacts* developed (e.g., policy recommendations, book/monograph, program, article, curriculum, data set).
Outcome	Community engagement is described by the *purpose*, the expected or achieved contributions to populations or stakeholders, or the *values*, the principled intentions that drive efforts to engage.
Process	Community engagement is described by the *relationship*, the ways in which partners work together (e.g., collaboration, reciprocity, mutual benefit), or *epistemology*, the primacy of community members in the co-construction of and sharing of knowledge.

Findings

How is community engagement defined as scholarly activity? What are the characteristics that might help one determine how CES was defined by the scholars who wrote and voted on the policy? To uncover the metanarratives of how CES was described, we analyzed the definitional characteristics across unit policies.

University-Level Policy Document

On the whole, CES was described overwhelmingly by means of the types of activities a scholar might engage in or the type of artifacts they might produce (outputs)—and it was not often described as ways to engage partners (process) or achieve community purposes and public values (outcome). For example, 10 of 12 items described in the policy (see Table 1) included activities and artifacts such as "consulting and providing technical assistance and/or services to public and private organizations" and "writing position papers for the general public." The policy expressed just two purposes (outcomes): "Changes in professional practice, institutional processes, or public policy" and "illustrations of ways in which the activity enhanced the University or the community."

Determining whether the university policy indicated any sense of CES as a process was difficult. We identified two instances that could be labeled as process descriptions: "Collaborating with schools, businesses, advocacy groups, community groups, and civic agencies to develop policies" and "Providing leadership in or making significant contributions to economic and community development activities." In both of these instances, "collaborating" and "providing leadership" describe ways in which partners work together (i.e., relationship or relational process) to contribute to the community. However, commitment to reciprocity and mutual benefit, hallmarks of DCE, or epistemology, the primacy of community members in the co-construction of and sharing of knowledge, are not made explicit. In sum, the university policy set an initial example for the rest of the campus that CES may be represented by describing outputs—primarily, listing activities and scholarly artifacts.

Definitions Document

The definitions document was purposefully inclusive of descriptions that characterized CES in terms of processes and outcomes, more so than outputs. The DCE was, in fact, used to help draft the document and two of its authors (John Saltmarsh and Patti Clayton) had been consultants to UNCG during the time of the policy changes. As a result, a combination of outputs, outcomes, and processes are included throughout the definitions document as descriptive characteristics (see Table 2). For example, the full description of the term *community-engaged research and creative activity* is comprehensively described in the definitions document in this way:

> The collaborative generation, refinement, conservation, and exchange of reciprocally beneficial and societally relevant knowledge that is generated in collaboration with, communicated to, and validated by peers in academe and the community. Community engaged research and creative activity produces products

> informed by (multi)disciplinary knowledge, including, but not limited to publications, exhibitions, and programs that simultaneously meets campus mission and goals as well as addresses issues of societal concern. It is research or creative activity that involves systematic inquiry, produces results that are publicly observable, allows for critique, and is available for others to use and develop. Community-engaged research and creative activity demonstrate methodological rigor through the use of methods that are appropriate to the goals, questions, and context of the work. Community-engaged research and creative activity is undertaken in collaboration with community partners who help set research questions, determine methodology, join in creating research projects, and/or engage in other activities that bridge academic and community contexts.

Other terms were similarly, thickly described, including community engagement, community-engaged scholarship, community-engaged teaching, community-engaged service, community, and reciprocity. Whereas the university policy uses bulleted lists to describe terms, the terms listed in the definitions document are described in one or more paragraphs through comprehensive explications of the outputs, outcomes, and processes of community engagement to ensure the definitions articulate the full values and principles of the Democratic Civic Engagement framework.

School-Level Policy Documents

Although a policy may use a community engagement or broader public-dimension term, it may or may not include enough information or context to allow one to deduce whether CES is demonstrated through outputs, outcomes, process, or some combination thereof. For this reason, nearly half of the schools (three of seven) included CES terms but were coded as having no definitional characteristics. Of the four schools that described the terms, two did so using the full complement of outputs, outcomes, and purposes, similar to the definitions document, while the other two described outputs or processes but not outcomes (see Table 4). This shows a range of ways that faculty writing the school policies chose to articulate CES (or not) and, further, that they chose *not* to simply adopt the wording introduced by the university policy.

Three of the four policies are clear that collaboration and reciprocity are distinctive, differentiating features of CES. For example, the College of Arts and Science policy states:

> Community engaged scholarship is also distinct from other kinds of research in that it is undertaken in collaboration with community partners who help set research questions, determine methodology, join in creating research projects, and/or engage in other activities that bridge the researcher's academic context and the community context of the partner(s).

That three units wrote somewhat similar statements, specifically stating collaboration and reciprocal processes as distinctive features of CES, suggests they consulted another text apart from the university policy. This distinction echoes the descriptions of CES shared in the definitions document, suggesting that faculty used it to shape their statements.

Table 4
Sample of Text Used in School-Level Policies by Definitional Characteristic Code

College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)	
Outputs, Outcomes, Processes	Community-engaged scholarship is distinct from service in several ways. Unlike service, community-engaged scholarship produces research products such as publications or exhibitions. It is not merely descriptive but is grounded in theory, applicable to other contexts, and demonstrates methodological rigor in terms that give it disciplinary or interdisciplinary status. Community-engaged scholarship is also distinct from other kinds of research in that it is undertaken in collaboration with community partners who help set research questions, determine methodology, join in creating research projects, and/or engage in other activities that bridge the researcher's academic context and the community context of the partner(s).
School of Education (SOE)	
Processes, Outcomes	Community engagement refers to research/creative activities, teaching, and service activities that are collaboratively undertaken by faculty members with community partners, staff, and/or students through processes that exemplify reciprocal partnerships and public purposes (http://communityengagement.uncg.edu/definitions/).
School of Music, Theater, and Dance (SMTD)	
Processes, Outputs	Community-engaged scholarship is also distinct from other kinds of research in that it is undertaken in collaboration with community partners who help set research questions, determine methodology, join in creating research projects, and/or engage in other activities that bridge the researcher's academic context and the community context of the partner(s). Unlike service, community-engaged scholarship produces research products such as performances, publications, or exhibitions.
Health and Human Sciences (HHS)	
Outputs	*Community-Engaged Teaching* • Developing and delivering community-based instruction such as service-learning experiences, on-site courses, clinical experiences, professional internships, and collaborative programs • Developing and delivering off-campus teaching activities such as study-abroad courses and experiences, international instruction, and distance-education courses • Developing and delivering instruction to communities and other constituencies *Community-Engaged Research and Creative Activities* • Writing papers for refereed journals and conference proceedings • Creating exhibits in educational and cultural institutions • Disseminating community-engaged research through public programs and events • Conducting and disseminating directed or contracted research • Conducting and reporting program-evaluation research or public-policy analyses for other institutions and agencies • Developing innovative solutions that address social, economic, or environmental challenges (e.g., inventions, patents, products, services, clinical procedures, and practices) *Service to External Communities through Community Engagement* • Conducting directed or contracted research • Conducting program, policy, and personnel evaluation research for other institutions and agencies • Consulting and providing technical assistance to public and private organizations • Conducting public policy analyses for local, national, and international governmental or nongovernmental agencies • Informing general audiences through seminars, conferences, and lectures • Interpreting technical information for a variety of audiences • Writing summaries of research, policy analyses, and position papers for the general public and targeted audiences • Serving as an expert witness • Testifying before the Legislature and Congressional Committees (state, national) • Editing newsletters in one's field or discipline • Serving as an expert for the press and other media • Developing solutions to problems and inventions • Developing clinical procedures and practices • Collaborating with schools, industry, and civic agencies to develop policies • Developing and managing exhibits in other educational and cultural institutions • Developing and managing festivals and summer programs in the arts • Providing leadership in or making significant contributions to economic and community development activities • Organizing and managing conferences

Department-Level Policy Documents

Over two-thirds of department policies reviewed (26 of 41) described community engagement beyond the naming of a CES term. That means that 15 departments named, or used a term, such as "community engagement" but did not further describe CES at all.

Figure 1 shows the types of characteristics used across the policies. To understand the range of ways that departments described CES, we coded each policy depending on the number and type of definitional characteristics. Understanding the number of characteristics helps us see how expansive or focused the descriptions, and the type of characteristic helps us see which definitional characteristics were most and least relevant to policies.

Over one-third (10) referenced one characteristic, nearly one-half (12) referenced two, and just under one-third (8) referenced all three descriptive characteristics. Therefore, descriptions tended to be multidimensional, more so than unidimensional. Those that chose to describe one characteristic tended to describe collaborative and reciprocal processes, more so than outputs and outcomes. This suggests that faculty must have looked elsewhere beyond the preceding university policy for ideas of how to articulate and draft language describing CES, such as the definitions document. For example, the School of Health and Human Sciences copied from the university policy, verbatim, the example list of outputs one might see in each of the categories of teaching, research, and service (see Table 4), and the Public Health Education Department also included a similar list (see Table 5, row 2). Other department policies, such as those shared in Table 5, followed the lead of the definitions document, emphasizing the importance of a more multicharacteristic approach and, especially, processes.

Over half of the departments that described CES in some way (18 of 26) did so as a process through which community members serve a role in the activity or partnership. Approximately half of the department policies

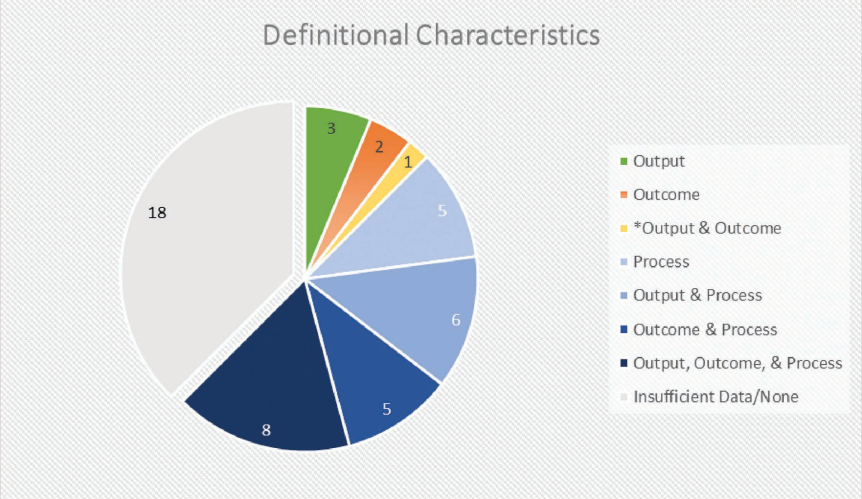

Figure 1 Frequency of Definitional Characteristics across Policies.

Table 5
Sample of Text Used in Department-Level Policies by Definitional Characteristic Code

Output, Outcome, Process	History Department: The department also values community-engaged research and scholarship (CER). CER differs from traditional scholarship in that it reaches audiences beyond academic peers, often emerges from a process of creative collaboration with community partners, and tends to culminate in products other than the academic monograph. Public Health Education: Community-engaged or community engagement includes research, teaching, and service activities that are collaboratively undertaken by faculty members with community partners, staff, and/or students through processes that exemplify reciprocal partnerships and are carried out for public purposes. Community-engaged teaching is defined as: "1) those activities that honor principles of community engagement, and 2) provide opportunities for students, community participants, and community partners to collaborate with faculty members for the dual and integrated purposes of learning and service." Community-engaged teaching includes reciprocity with community partners such as schools and/or human service organizations to identify community needs and to create, revise, and/or deliver appropriate learning opportunities that are mutually beneficial. Examples might include: • Designing/teaching a course on community-engaged research methods with community partners. In this type of course, students may be partnered with agencies to design and conduct research. Such an arrangement benefits student learning and the agency. • Designing/teaching service-learning courses that emphasize reciprocity between community partners and students; • Leading study-abroad courses with a service-learning component designed with or by a community partner; • Collaborating in the design and delivery of professional development opportunities for community members/employees.
Output, Process	Media Studies: The Department of Media Studies values community-engaged scholarship, which it defines as a form of collaborative research or creative work that results in or can be evidenced by a tangible product or work of authorship. (Like other research and creative scholarship, it is the tangible creation that distinguishes community-engaged scholarship from community-engaged service). Community-engaged scholarship is undertaken in collaboration with or at the request of community partners who may help set the research or creative questions, help determine the methodology, and join in the process, engaging in activities that bridge the candidate's academic context and the community context of the creative or research partner. It can result in traditional research publications, professional documents, or media texts (as previously defined). It is not merely descriptive but is grounded in theory, applicable to other contexts, and demonstrates methodological or academic rigor in terms that give it disciplinary or interdisciplinary status. African American Studies Department: The African American Studies Department also accepts community-engaged scholarship, if this form of scholarship also produces products such as publications and exhibitions. This research must be grounded in theory, applicable to other contexts, and demonstrates methodological rigor in terms that give it disciplinary or interdisciplinary status. It must be undertaken in collaboration with community partners who help set research questions, determine methodology, join in creating research projects, and/or engage in other activities that bridge the researcher's academic and the community context of the partner(s). African American Studies acknowledges community-engaged scholarship as distinct from traditional university service

(*Continued*)

Table 5 (Continued)
Sample of Text Used in Department-Level Policies by Definitional Characteristic Code

Outcome, Process	Sociology Department: Community-engaged scholarship includes research/creative activities undertaken by faculty members in collaboration with community partners. It involves the collaborative production of knowledge. As noted in university documents (see Community Engagement: Terms and Definitions for Promotion and Tenure Guidelines) it involves both community engagement and scholarship. Evaluation of community-engaged scholarship will be based upon review of research outcomes/products. These may include research reports completed for and used by nonacademic organizations; research reports completed for and used by nonacademic organizations' evaluation of research instruments and outcomes; documentation of involvement in community-based research and educational activities; transcripts of public testimony at government policy hearings; visual media substantially utilizing a candidate's research evidence of impact of the candidate's community-engaged scholarship activity (e.g., documentation that a report was used to expand an organization's services to more clients or community members or evidence that a report improved the quality of life in a specific community). In the cases of participatory research, nonacademic participants should be invited to provide input as to the effectiveness of the candidate's contributions to their organization or community; these documents should be as detailed and precise as possible in communicating the quantitative and qualitative indicators of research impact.

described outputs and half described outcomes. These findings suggest that some department policies followed the lead of the university policy, describing CES by the outputs created. Policies that described CES processes did so in various ways. Some descriptions of processes were very succinct. For example, the History Department wrote that CES "emerges from a process of creative collaboration with community partners," and the Sociology Department describes it in terms of the "collaborative production of knowledge."" The Public Health Education Department, in contrast, was relatively more expansive, describing the different phases during which a partner may be included reciprocally, from the "identification of community needs" to "creat(ing), revis(ing), and/or deliver(ing) appropriate learning opportunities that are mutually beneficial." Hence, some policies provided thicker descriptions of what collaborative and reciprocal partnerships looked like, particularly with regards to what roles the partners played in the partnership activities and phases.

Discussion and Implications

Even as scholars of community engagement have theorized about the main tenets of CES, and the Carnegie Foundation has provided a standard definition of community engagement through its elective classification, practitioners and scholars are still exploring, from largely practical and technical points of view, how it is—and can best be—described for the purpose of writing faculty review and rewards policies. The case study presented here provides an example of how faculty, working across a single institution, over a decade ago (2008–2012), conceptualized and codified CES in promotion and tenure policies. Understanding the range of CES terms that proliferated from university to school- and department-level policies (Janke et al., 2023) and the type and range

of descriptive characteristics used within and across policies (this study) are helpful for future research that will examine the effect of the policy changes on institutional practices and faculty culture vis-a-vis CES. Given that epistemic inclusion requires reciprocal processes with community members, this study also advances scholarship on how policies might be written to be more inclusive. As one of the first campuses to integrate recognition for CES into promotion and tenure policy, UNCG provides an important institutional case study.

Relationships and Epistemology as Core Descriptions of Process

At the most basic level, our efforts to understand how CES was defined in the various unit policies was to understand whether and how the faculty who sought to legitimize CES as a form of faculty work had succeeded in codifying support into actual policy. We started, initially, from the desire to determine whether the descriptions upheld DCE principles of collaboration, mutual benefit, reciprocity, public purposes, and epistemic inclusion. From the hindsight of nearly a decade, and the growth of attention to and scholarship about the intersections of CES, full participation, and epistemic justice, our research team applied a critical lens on this study. Beyond simply creating a list of categories that might be used like a checklist or rubric for determining whether a statement of CES is upholding the definitional characteristics of CES, we considered what are the ethical implications of articulating (or, more importantly, not articulating) the process dimensions of CES—namely, reciprocal relationships and epistemic inclusion. Do policies that seek to fully recognize CES go far enough if they list activities and artifacts and espouse public purposes and visions—but do not go on to also address elements of the partnership process that are required for epistemically inclusive engagement?

At its most foundational level, it is the process—why and how partners work together—that differentiates CES from traditional forms of scholarship. This was an important insight we developed in coding for definitional characteristics. In many ways, processes are what distinguish CES from other forms of scholarship. Is it precisely because of the elements of relationships and epistemology that CES is distinct from, while often confused with, community-based scholarship, public scholarship, and applied scholarship, although it has elements of each. From the perspective of relationships and epistemology, community-based research can be done in ways in which knowledge is extracted without collaboration from communities, without their say in how it will be interpreted and used, or whether it will be shared with the community. While CES is by nature community based, community-based scholarship is not necessarily community-engaged. From the perspective of relationships and epistemology, CES refers to moving beyond the wall of the academy to collaborate with community partners to cogenerate knowledge whereas public scholarship typically refers to knowledge generated within the academy and shared externally with the public. Finally, from the perspective of relationships and epistemology, applied scholarship is designed to document and solve a specific problem or provide innovative solutions to issues affecting an individual, group, or society through the practical application of research methods to social problems. While community-engaged research by its nature has application for addressing community issues, it

differs from applied research, which is typically conducted without relationships of equality with community stakeholders or community input. (For a recent review and further articulation of these terms see Blanchard & Furco, 2021.)

Epistemology and Equity

Community-engaged faculty are likely to be among the most marginalized within traditional academic culture, along with faculty of color, women, and assistant professors (Antonio, 2002; Antonio et al., 2000; Baez, 2000, Bellas & Toutkoushan, 1999; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; O'Meara, 2002; Sax et al., 1996; Turner et al., 2008; Vogelgesang et al., 2010). Faculty of color are more likely to experience stress and dissatisfaction pretenure (Turner et al., 2008), be advised away from CES toward more traditional forms of scholarship, and are more likely to depart their institutions before standing for review (Antonio, 2002).

Relational ways of knowing through collectivist and relationship-centered identities and cultures challenge the individualist and objectivist norms developed in the white, patriarchal, Eurocentric academy. Feminist (Belenky et al., 1986; Naples, 2003; Ward, 2010) and decolonial and Indigenous epistemologies (Smith, 1999) are grounded in the primacy and positionality of the knower and their experiences and relationships as connected and interdependent with knowledge. This kind of an epistemological stance runs counter to and critiques dominant approaches to scholarship and the way that scholarship is validated and legitimized in the academy. Dominant approaches not only marginalize certain forms of scholarship but also the scholars who produce it. For this reason, chairs and senior faculty mentors often suggest that turning away from CES will improve a pretenure faculty member's case for promotion and tenure, encouraging them to wait until after review to commit time to less highly regarded scholarship or "service" work (Burlingame, 2015). It is in this way that faculty reward policies can create epistemic exclusion. Epistemic exclusion occurs for faculty of color, because they are "more likely than others to have diverse approaches to their scholarship and to study populations and topics that do not fit neatly within these disciplinary norms." The traditional system of legitimacy "prevents faculty of color from being valued as legitimate and credible knowers/scholars (Settles et al., 2021, p. 495). Drawing attention to individual biases as well as structural/institutional practices, epistemic exclusion research suggests that "seemingly objective" (p. 504) forms of evaluations disproportionally and negatively affect faculty of color.

Finally, processes grounded in relationships and epistemology are marginalized due to current metrics and measures—it is much more difficult, and academically counter-normative, to document, describe, review, and evaluate process than it is to evaluate outputs or outcomes. UNCG's university policy is evidence of this; it lists many activities and artifacts, essentially overshadowing indicators of outcomes or processes. Alperin et al.'s (2019) research suggests that the types of outputs and outcomes produced by CES are valued the least in promotion and tenure guidelines They also found that promotion and tenure policies tend to provide specific metrics describing research outputs, which reflect traditional scholarship, and while many universities use the term "impact," it is primarily in relation to research, describing traditional scholarship, and minimally addressing authentic CES, if at all. Alperin et al. also found that CES is sometimes considered a service activity, which in the

context of what is valued at a research university is less consequential than research and teaching. For institutions of higher education that *do* encourage multiple forms of scholarship, the outlook is more positive for community-engaged scholars. Faculty at such institutions are significantly more likely to report that (1) community engagement (and teaching scholarship) counted more for faculty evaluation, (2) a broader set of criteria was used to assess scholarship, and (3) report a higher percentage of tenure and promotion cases that emphasized their work in these areas (O'Meara, 2005). Expanding the definition of scholarship in promotion and tenure policy is a crucial aspect of recruiting, supporting, and retaining an expanded diversity of scholars in our institutions and higher education more broadly.

Future Scholarship and Conclusion

As this study demonstrates, during the time of policy revisions, many faculty look for resources to help them define and describe community engagement in a way that resonates with their disciplinary contexts—while others fail to write anything at all. One resource to be developed as a result of this study may be a rubric to help guide the development and review of policies, increasing awareness of the core characteristics and how to address them, inclusively, in written policy. Future scholarship will also examine whether and how such policy changes have shaped the experiences of community-engaged scholars.

As institutions of higher education, such as UNCG, stand at the crossroads of who they have been and who they are becoming, it is essential that faculty reward policies align with the priorities, practices, and principles of the scholars they seek to recruit and retain in their ranks (Ward et al., 2023). Increasingly, institutions of higher education, including UNCG, are developing task forces and committees to uncover embedded systems of bias and oppression in institutional policies, procedures, and practices—and to create new opportunities for equity, inclusion, and justice. Promotion and tenure are at the very heart of the faculty experience (O'Meara et al., 2015); it shapes feelings of belonging as well as how one chooses to enact scholarly work. Promotion and tenure are literally and figuratively pathways as well as "on-ramps" toward a long-term, presumably life-long, academic career; to be denied tenure is to turn, instead, onto the exit ramp with the need to seek out alternate destinations and affiliations.

Akin to the critique that a "color-blind" approach allows individuals to ignore systemic and systematic bias and racism, but assuming that equal treatment will lead to equitable outcomes, we call attention to and warn against similar "scholarship blindness" in faculty culture and promotion and tenure policies—the insistence that the same measures and metrics used to assess the quality of traditional scholarship can also be used to equally and equitably assess the quality of all forms of scholarship, including CES.

Our research suggests three key insights. First, to fully and equitably recognize and value CES, tenure and promotion policy must do more than include community-engagement terms—it must also clearly describe core principles of public purposes, mutually beneficial partnerships, reciprocity, and epistemic inclusion. That is, a policy may include a term like CES, but without a sufficiently accurate and comprehensive description of what the term means, the policy may not be useful in creating the support the reformers sought in the first place.

Second, definitions of CES must address the foundational processes of community engagement. The foundational processes, specifically, include the twin concepts of relationships and epistemic inclusion. While many important and valued forms of public-facing scholarship, such as applied scholarship and public scholarship, can be assessed by their outputs and outcomes, CES must also be assessed by its faithfulness to processes. CES occurs in a context of partnership—relationships that engage individuals whose knowledge is generated both inside and beyond the academy in ways that are mutually beneficial, reciprocal, and asset-based. This study suggests that articulating the process—how this work is to be done—is a key element of defining the transformative difference of CES from other forms of scholarship. Over half of the policies emphasize this difference despite the university policy not doing so, which suggests that inclusive, reciprocal relationships and epistemology, especially, matter to CES scholars.

Third, CES, as an issue of faculty rewards, must be considered an issue of addressing equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice. As shared previously, community-engaged faculty are disproportionately likely to be underrepresented in higher education and/or in their disciplines. Additionally, the issue areas community-engaged scholars address and communities they collaborate with are likely to have been negatively impacted by systemic and systematic inequities in funding, public attention, and representation in academic literature, to name a few (Diaz & Bergman, 2013). We are currently in a moment (an era?) in which faculties are asking how they can better address systemic oppression and do better to support faculty of color and other underrepresented peoples in our institutions of higher education. As faculty turn to examine promotion and tenure through the lens of equity, inclusion, and justice, they must certainly address CES and issues of epistemic justice.

In sum, this study provides important insights as to the textual adaptations that were made to policy in the attempt to make them more inclusive and supportive of CES. We identified three categories of definitional characteristics (outputs, outcomes, processes) that can be used to help guide faculty who are attempting to revise policies so that they uphold the core principles of CES. We also demonstrated the connection between democratic civic engagement and epistemic justice. Such research is essential to understand, when the moment comes to write policy, what must be stated, specifically and explicitly, if community-engaged scholarship and community-engaged scholars are to be fully and equitably recognized and included for recognition and reward.

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