

Timothy K. Eatman, Ph.D.
Nominee Statement
International Association for Service Learning and Civic Engagement
Early Career Research Award

I am sitting in the library of a prestigious major research university having negotiated the buzz of move-out day as well as the rhythms of commencement preparation while walking across campus to get here. Parents, friends and students are packing cars with school and residence hall items - books and shelves, small refrigerators. Tents, stages, and audio systems are being erected in preparation for graduation ceremonies that will soon take place. I am struck powerfully by it all. My first sense is one of celebration. Another semester accomplished, another degree attained; the excitement is palpable. These families have reason to rejoice and I join with them. Young people are being launched from the academy, that multifaceted milieu of challenge and opportunity that has become my own professional base, into another period of life where they will take the values and lessons learned at home matched with and modified by the skills and attitudes they have acquired in the academy, moving from practice to purpose. While this sense of elation is authentic, I must admit that I have had to program myself to embrace it. I have learned to allow myself time to be unreservedly happy for those who have been able to access and enjoy the kind of rich learning experience and engagement period that academe represents because there is no way for me to keep a second even more powerful sense at bay for very long.

In an all-too-familiar emotional pattern, the joys of this first sense are almost simultaneously met with a deep contrasting frustration with the concentrated homogeneity of the university environment. Societal demographic realities help us to know that this pervasive homogeneity means that there are so many other families that will not experience the joys that register in my first sense of this scene. This is where my commitment to the mission of my home institution--"Scholarship in Action"--is most firmly grounded, and herein lies the strong personal appeal of publicly engaged scholarship to me as an educational sociologist.

My work brings a sense of rupture to entrenched inequities in the academy and their connections to the larger society. Not despite but precisely *because* of the critical edge of such work, a wellspring of optimism compels me to believe that we can develop much more sophisticated ways our pursuing the ideals of our society through higher education. Higher education forms part of a broad based, cross-sectoral movement that is bringing concerted energy to bear on social equality. Finding ways to value the true diversity of knowledge making is an important key to this work. Public scholarship, for me, makes possible a fluid, hybrid mix of socially responsive scholarly forms that emerge from and nourish the practice of civic professionals on and off campus. Publicly engaged scholarship is a genre of intellectual work that balances the need to know with the need to do. Maintaining that balance requires tapping the five senses of engagement: the sense of hope, the sense of history, the sense of passion, the sense of empathy, and the sense of planning.

My professional work in the academy is an effort to balance research and engagement. In my dual roles as a school of education faculty member and director of research for Imagining America (IA) I have played a leadership role in the work of engagement within the academy to urge, as Craig Calhoun has noted, a cognizance about the need for the university to study itself in general and especially around matters of societal relevance. There is indeed a significant tide of energy around bridging the gap between the marketplace and monastery mentality zones in American institutions of higher education and there exists a great need to understand the evolutionary process of this work. IA's Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship (TTI) has allowed me to develop this work in a substantive and sustained way.

Initiated through discussions begun by IA founding director Julie Ellison and sustained under the leadership of current director Jan Cohen-Cruz, the TTI created a community of inquiry around clarifying

the range of modes of knowledge production, expanding our understanding of scholarly products and interrogating the implications of such for the arc of the career and most especially the rewards system within the academy. This inquiry is perhaps best contextualized within the frame of needed institutional change for the university of the 21st century. The TTI extends IA's vision of public scholarship in higher education to the realm of faculty rewards, working through both persuasion and policy to stimulate a climate in higher education that embraces public scholarship and practice.

The IA report *Scholarship in public: Knowledge creation and tenure policy in the engaged university* captures the voices and perspectives of the 19 members of the Tenure Team, key higher education leaders at institutions of higher education throughout the nation with whom I conducted structured interviews. These leaders shared the current state of knowledge making in the academy through narratives that articulate both their professional socialization and experiences as executive decision makers. While the majority of these interviewees come from backgrounds that align with what are commonly referred to within the consortium as "the cultural disciplines" (arts, humanities and design fields), many are currently serving as university Presidents and Provosts, Association Directors, Deans and Department Chairs. These engaged scholarly leaders forecast the need for greater relevance of academic work and see this as inextricably tied to meaningful connections with "the community." The interview data were coded and analyzed yielding a wealth (450 pages) of important perspectives on higher education institutional change from which I continue to glean. I led the development of a robust knowledge base and a consortium-wide survey that preceded the development of the report.

This research has received important attention from national associations and partners. For example I presented the closing plenary keynote for provosts at the American Association for State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Mid-winter Academic Leaders meeting. I have also given presentations on this work at conferences sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, National Campus Compact, Association for Integrative Studies, The Democracy Imperative, the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement and a number of universities both inside and outside of the IA consortium.

Perhaps the greatest thrust of action/dissemination for this work is embodied in a set of regional meetings that IA, in collaboration with National Campus Compact conducted in 2009. I played a central role in developing and executing eight (8) mini-conferences where teams from eight (8) to ten (10) institutions came together for a daylong focus on faculty rewards for publicly engaged scholarship modeled after the initial TTI working conference. Regional meetings were held in Missouri, New York City, Virginia, Minnesota, Chicago, New Hampshire, Central New York and Indiana. These sessions were organized to share best practices about strategies for institutional change regarding faculty rewards for publicly engaged scholarship. Team members also participated in action planning activities and constructive critique toward policy change. Several institutions and associations that have used this scholarship in the redevelopment of their policies and practices creating concentric circles of policy change.

The aforementioned work has led to a next wave of scholarly inquiry that centers on the aspirations and decisions of graduate students and early career faculty who identify as publicly engaged scholars. Research has enlarged our understandings about the programs and projects of publicly engaged scholarship, but few studies examine the people who do the work. I intend to address this paucity through a national study that explores questions about the profile of the publicly engaged scholar.

I receive the nomination for this prestigious award with a great sense of humility as it relates to contributions that I may have made to the field and with a great sense of encouragement to forge ahead in the quest to realize the promise of a better more meaningful tomorrow. Higher education and publicly engaged scholarship can play a significant role in that effort.