

# Educating Practical Visionaries at Tufts University: A Framework for Community- University Co-Learning

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## Abstract

This paper contextualizes Co-learning, an emerging practice of sustained community partnership at Tufts University's Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP). Co-learning draws upon service learning, community-based research, university/community engagement and anchor institution strategies. It seeks to cultivate sustained and reciprocal partnerships that can transform power relationships in society and in the university.

The paper historicizes Co-learning within UEP's more than 40 years of community engaged learning, and through broader analysis of efforts to democratize U.S. universities, including popular movements and anti-racist struggles. Additionally it draws lessons from UEP's sustained partnerships with four organizations: Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), Chinese Progressive Association (CPA), Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), and Somerville Community Corporation (SCC).

It concludes with a framework for the implementation of Co-learning, and suggests challenges, opportunities and questions it raises for the department, the university, and for the field of democratic higher education.

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## List of Abbreviations

- ACE:** Alternatives for Community and Environment
- BLAST:** Bridge to Liberal Arts College Success at Tufts
- BRIDGE:** Bridge to Engineering Success at Tufts
- BRA:** Boston Redevelopment Authority
- CPA:** Chinese Progressive Association
- CBPR:** Community-based Participatory Research
- COPC:** Community Outreach Partnership Centers Program
- Co-Re:** Co-Learning Co-Research Partnerships
- CCPS:** College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University
- CPCS:** College of Public and Community Service at UMASS Boston
- DOE:** U.S. Department of Education
- DSNI:** Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
- DUSP:** Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT
- EJ:** Environmental Justice
- ESLARP:** East St. Louis Action Research Project
- FIPSE:** Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
- HUD:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- MA:** Master of Arts
- MBTA:** Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
- MCDI:** Management and Community Development Institute (Tufts)
- MPP:** Master of Public Policy



**PILOT:** Payment in Lieu of Taxes

**PVW:** Practical Visionaries Workshop

**PUSEP:** Program in Urban, Social and Environmental Policy (Tufts)

**SCC:** Somerville Community Corporation

**SFSU:** San Francisco State University

**SL:** Service Learning

**TCRC:** Tufts Community Research Center

**UCP:** University Community Partnership

**UEP:** Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (Tufts)



## Chapter 1: Background

### Overview of UEP

Tufts University's Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP) is a graduate program in the School of Arts and Sciences, offering Masters of Arts (MA) and Masters of Public Policy (MPP) degrees in preparation for careers in the public, non-profit, and private sector. UEP began in 1973 as the Program in Urban, Social and Environmental Policy (PUSEP), an interdisciplinary program within Tufts' Political Science Department, founded by Swiss planner-architect Hermann H. Field (1910-2001), the planning director of Tufts' School of Medicine from 1961-1972.

Field envisioned planning education that would respond to the integrated problems of urban development, land use planning, architectural design, and social and environmental concerns--a pedagogy that would help planning and policy practitioners holistically engage concerns of community participation, social justice, and the environment. Long before the urban planning field was addressing environmental issues, Field taught the first known course in environmental planning and design which eventually led to the master's Program in Urban, Social and Environmental Policy (PUSEP).

I was appalled by the mindless despoiling of the physical environment essential to any quality of life, urban or otherwise, in which my profession was a key participant" ("History of UEP," [ase.tufts.edu/uep/about/history](http://ase.tufts.edu/uep/about/history)).

First a program within the Political Science Department, PUSEP was promoted to an independent department in 1980, and became the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy (UEP). As UEP increasingly emphasized planning in addition to policy, it became in 2000 the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (Bratt et al 2012).

Today, UEP's mission and curricular practice continue to draw from Field's original vision of the integration of social and environmental concerns. In its mission statement, the program states:

Our goal is the education of a new generation of leaders, 'practical visionaries,' who will contribute to the development of inclusive and sustainable communities. A key step toward this is making our institutions more responsive to child, adult, and ultimately community well-being by helping them understand, empathize with, and respond to the social, economic, and environmental needs of individuals and communities ("Welcome to UEP," [ase.tufts.edu/uep/about](http://ase.tufts.edu/uep/about)).

In addition to its interdisciplinary approach, UEP integrates field-based learning and engagement with local practitioners. Its applied and interdisciplinary curriculum approach is expressed through six core values ("Welcome to UEP," [ase.tufts.edu/uep/about](http://ase.tufts.edu/uep/about)):

1. An appreciation of the inextricable linkages between social, economic and environmental issues and the ability to make policy and planning recommendations accordingly;
2. An appreciation of the role of values in policy formation and planning and the ethical/social responsibility of policy and planning professionals to act accordingly;
3. An appreciation of the deeply embedded nature of gender, age, race, class, disability, culture and sexual orientation in all aspects of public policy and planning;
4. An appreciation of the centrality of spatial, social and environmental justice to all aspects of public policy and planning;
5. An appreciation of the need to understand the role of individual and community rights and responsibilities in public policy and planning; and

6. An appreciation of the need to move society toward the development of sustainable communities where there is a high quality of human life, delivered in a just and equitable manner while respecting the limits of supporting ecosystems.

### Community-based Learning and Practice at UEP: Toward Co-Learning

As a community ‘embedded,’ program, UEP has been co-producing learning and research through long-term, reciprocal, place-based partnerships. Since its founding in 1973, UEP has hosted several hundred student field projects, over 1,000 student internships, and dozens of community-based research projects with partners in the Greater Boston area. Faculty view these partnerships as “two-way mutually beneficial relationships that provide the opportunity to connect theory and practice, and to create knowledge that is usable, democratic and makes a difference in the world” (Loh 2010).

In 2011, Penn Loh, Lecturer and Director of Community Practice at UEP launched the Practical Visionaries Workshop (PVW), an initiative “bringing together practitioners, students, and faculty into a community of inquiry to learn, share, and work toward solutions to critical challenges in public policy and planning practice” (Loh 2015). Most of the practitioners involved have been staff of base-building organizations in Boston’s lower income communities of color. It has served as a venue for community-based learning, research and strategy on just and sustainable economic development and community-driven planning. Participation in PVW has integrated several community partners into UEP and become a pipeline for

greater racial diversity at UEP, with some becoming Visiting Practitioners, and enrolling as Neighborhood Fellows in UEP's mid-career Masters in Public Policy program. PVW has also provided a powerful arena for student learning, research, professional development, and intercultural practice (Loh 2015). It has been a pilot for a new model of community-based learning, research and partnership at UEP.

Loh is working to expand PVW from an initiative to a more widely applied approach to partnership at UEP. This vision has been expressed through a new initiative, CoRe (Co-Learning and Co-Research Partnerships) ("Co-Learning"), which seeks to "go beyond a project-driven, client-based model toward a more place-based, reciprocal model where university and community partner to 'co-learn' and 'co-produce' knowledge. Rather than limiting partnerships to semester-to-semester one-off projects, CoRe looks to develop long-term collaborations among university and community partners to advance just, sustainable, community-driven development" (Loh 2015).

Through CoRe, UEP would work intensively with some of its partners through 2-3 engagements on longer-term projects. These partners would receive some resources for staff participation, and would be able to plan around UEP's in-kind resources such as field projects, student internships, and theses, which would be more strategically integrated to advance selected projects. In short, partners would be resourced as co-researchers and co-educators through multi-year, long-term partnerships. These partnerships would advance community-engaged learning, research, scholarship, and

practice, address important social issues, and serve as a pipeline for recruiting students from lower income communities of color (Loh 2015).

While CoRe represents a new approach, it is anchored by UEP's history of long-term, deep community relationships and an outgrowth of some the lessons from this experience. This paper offers historical and pedagogical context for UEP's emergent Co-learning approach, as expressed through CoRe. I define Co-learning as democratic and transformative approach to pedagogy, research, and partnership. It is a flexible and evolving practice that draws upon but goes beyond traditional methods of service learning, engaged research, university/community partnership.

In her study of five engaged universities, Ostrander (2004) finds that engagement is best practiced and evaluated "through dynamic and developmental frameworks that provide alternative ways of thinking and acting under locally specified, different, and changing circumstances" (p.91), contrasting with the "more common search for singular models or universal best practices" (p.75). Similarly, I would argue that UEP's emergent Co-learning approach is best understood within its own historical and institutional context, and in relation to broader social and political developments.

## Research Methodology

In this paper I contextualize the emergent ‘Co-learning’ model expressed through Co-Re by placing it within UEP’s own history of community strategies and within broader traditions of place-based university/community partnerships, democratic planning, and engaged research. I argue that UEP’s emergent Co-learning model would not be possible without its foundation of deep, long-term, and reciprocal partnerships. Co-learning builds on lessons from these partnership experiences, and from the contributions and limitations of other university engagement strategies.

I situate Co-learning within the history of U.S. university engagement, traditions of community-based and action research, popular movements and anti-racist struggles. I also place co-learning pedagogically, and within wider discussions of university civic engagement, democratic education, and service learning. Through historical analysis, I document the stages and evolution of UEP’s community strategies that have paved the way for the current co-learning phase. Through qualitative research with faculty and community partners, I draw out challenges and lessons from UEP’s engagement experiences that contextualize the rationale for moving toward ‘Co-learning.’ Finally, I discuss the possibilities and challenges of co-learning in the current political and institutional context. This research and documentation will help to distill lessons from UEP’s 42 years of community



practice and offer a conceptual framework for university-community Co-learning.

### Research Questions:

#### **1. How has UEP's approach to community engagement evolved over time?**

*1a. How has UEP's approach paralleled or differed from the approaches of other place-based university/community partnerships in the U.S.?*

**1aa.** How has place-based engaged practice at universities developed historically, and what have been the different forces driving it in its various forms?

**1ab.** What have been some of the dominant trends, models and approaches to university civic engagement and engaged research in past 30 years? What have been the strengths and challenges of these approaches?

#### **2. What lessons can be learned from UEP's community engagement experience about the rationale for co-learning, the conditions that support it to take root, and nourish its growth?**

*2a. How do faculty characterize the stages of UEP's community practice?*

*2b. What do faculty assess as the high points and low points in UEP's community engagement work, and the factors informing these?*

*2c. How have UEP's core community partners experienced their work with UEP, the strengths and challenges?*

*2d. What do UEP's core community partners think could support these partnerships to be more impactful for their work?*

## Methods

My methods include literature review, secondary data and content analysis, and semi-structured personal interviews with former and current UEP faculty and long-term community partners. The literature review situates UEP's approach within current and historical approaches in the field. Through secondary data analysis and interviews with faculty and community practitioners, I document the history, stages, and evolution of UEP's community strategies, and lessons learned from the experience.

### **a. Literature Review**

The historical and theoretical basis for Co-learning can be drawn from democratic thinkers such as John Dewey, from W.E.B. DuBois and the Black Radical Tradition and from the 1960's and 70's student radicalism that challenged the division between university and community. The literature review offers a history of democratic engagement in universities, and discusses more approaches such as service learning, community-based research and University Community Partnerships (UCP's)

### **b. Secondary Data Analysis**

A synthesis and analysis of existing documents and archival materials inform my description of UEP's community strategies and methods of the emergent co-learning model.

### **c. Primary Interviews**

I conducted semi-structured personal interviews with faculty and community partners that have been most involved in shaping UEP's historic and current community engagement strategies. The goal of these interviews was to map the stages and evolution of UEP's community practice, and to draw out lessons from the process that have created the conditions for and helped to inform the co-learning model. What are the places where community practice has worked well, and what are the places where it has not and why?

For faculty, interviews were biased towards those who have had both recent and historical roles with community partners. The historical periods were defined primarily through interviews with the three longest standing faculty at UEP, Sheldon Krinsky, Rachel Bratt, and Robert Hollister. The more recent stages were defined through the reflections of James Jennings, Julian Agyeman, and Penn Loh, all of whom have deeply shaped UEP's community engagement efforts. Additionally, framing documents developed by Rachel Bratt and Penn Loh provided important data.

For community practitioners, I selected representatives from UEP's four core partner organizations, which include Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE),

Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) and Chinese Progressive Association (CPA). These four organizations have had the most long-term and consistent engagements with UEP, have been central participants in UEP's pilot of Co-learning through the Practical Visionaries Workshop. Interviewees included Lydia Lowe, Executive Director of CPA; Trish Settles, former Environmental Organizer at DSNI (and UEP alum); Harry Smith, Director of Sustainable and Economic Development at DSNI; Meridith Levy, Executive Director at SCC (and UEP alum); and Penn Loh, former Executive Director at ACE and current UEP faculty member. These interviews were conducted both in person and by telephone, and were recorded with summarizing notes and select transcription.

### **Goals and Beneficiaries**

UEP's decades of experience navigating the nuances of university/community partnership offers important lessons both for its own reflection, for Tufts University, and for the broader field. The primary goals of this study are to distill lessons from UEP's engagement experience, to contextualize UEP's emergent approach, and to offer a framework and reflection for future implementation.

Requiring trust, shared context, and long-term relationships, Co-learning is not a mechanism that can be "replicated," but it is an approach that universities can employ, with generative impacts for both community and pedagogy. My hope that this study can be useful to UEP faculty who currently engage or plan to engage communities, as well as leadership at

Tufts University and Tisch College, advancing the university's Active Citizenship mission. Additionally I aim to provide useful reference to planning educators and engaged scholars, students and urban planning professionals, raising questions and offering lessons for their community practice.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review and Analytical Framework

### Introduction

The process through which universities have both advanced and retreated from their civic missions has occurred not within institutional vacuums, but within a context of changing social and political conditions, and often in relation to the ebbs and flows of grassroots social movements. Moreover, U.S. universities have historically been important sites of struggle for popular movements, where students, faculty, and surrounding communities have contested the definitions, limits, and beneficiaries of research and knowledge.

From the Progressive era to the post WWII period, the Great Society programs and social movements of the 1960's, to the 1980's conservative backlash that shapes the current moment, institutions have been created and recreated through a dynamic interplay of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' forces. This literature review will discuss some of the diverse histories of democratic engagement in universities, the ideas that have shaped it and the practical forms it has taken. After a broad overview of the trends in university public roles since the mid-nineteenth century, I describe the rise of the modern research university and the growth of federal investment in post-war period. I then explore the ways in the Great Society programs and War on Poverty and the mass social movements of this period, many of which were rooted on campuses, produced new roles, political dynamics, and practices at universities. I then discuss the impacts of conservative backlash

and economic restructuring, and the subsequent retrenchment of many universities. I situate the more recent university civic engagement initiatives and practices beginning in the 1980's as part of a range of responses to retrenchment and attempts to renew university civic missions in the context of fiscal devolution, privatization, and restructuring under neoliberalism.<sup>1</sup>

An important development in the 1990's was the university community partnerships (UCP's) initiated through the Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Many of these initiatives sought to reverse patterns of university retrenchment and spur community development in disinvested neighborhoods by situating the university as a primary stakeholder, an approach that evolved into a broader strategy of collaboration among anchor institutions. In addition to urban development programs, some COPC's incorporated community organizing and action research. Many of the strengths and limitations of these experiences are well documented, and their summation offers important lessons for current and future approaches to university and community partnerships. UEP's emergent Co-learning model draws from some of the lessons and limitations of UCP's, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> 'Devolution' refers to the decentralization of power from federal to state and local governments for the delivery of human services and community development programs. Also referred to as 'New Federalism,' this process was expanded under the Reagan administration through Community Development Block Grants. Devolution occurred concurrently with disinvestment from domestic social welfare spending and increased use of private institutions for service delivery. This process was also associated with the transition from a Keynesian to Neoliberal economic regime. See: Herbers, John. "The new federalism: Unplanned, innovative, and here to stay." *Governing* 1, no. 1 (1987): 28-37

from the methods of action research, popular education, and social movement organizing.

### **Part I: Theoretical and Historical Roots of University Engagement**

Since the 1990's a body of literature has emerged calling for renewal of university civic missions and a scholarship of engagement (Boyer 1990, Boyte 1996, Checkoway 2001, 2008; Harkavy 1994, 1998, 2006; Boyte and Fretz 2010). The primary point of reference for this scholarship is John Dewey, the early twentieth century democratic philosopher who is widely recognized as one of the founders of experiential education (Harkavy 1998, Checkoway 2001, Boyte 2003). Dewey argued that education was not simply a means to deliver knowledge or skills to a student, but a vehicle through which people develop consciousness about themselves as social actors. In his view, schools are institutions that facilitate this process of consciousness development, and their contribution to democratic civil society (Dewey 1916).

The concept of education as a process of consciousness development toward collective action and social change is also rooted in the Black Radical Tradition (Marable 1986, Jennings 2000). In the early twentieth century, the scholar and Pan-African activist W.E.B DuBois called for the development of a 'talented tenth' (DuBois 1903), which commonly misinterpreted as an elite intelligentsia, was actually a call for advanced educational opportunities for African Americans that could help facilitate Civil Rights movement leadership during a period in which the vast majority had no access to education or



literacy (Jennings 2000). This tradition of public intellectualism inspired by DuBois was reignited during the 1960's and 1970's through the student activism that led to the creation of African American and Ethnic Studies, disciplines that were embedded in community-based research methodologies and an ethic of community service and partnership (Jennings 2000). Expressed through these struggles and through engaged scholarship, the Black radicalism of this period fundamentally challenged the division between university and community (Jennings 2000).

### **Origins of University Public Missions**

Despite the traditions of public intellectualism espoused by Dewey and DuBois, until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, U.S. universities generally mirrored their European counterparts, functioning as elite institutions dedicated to the pursuit of scientific knowledge (Boyle and Silver 2005). The most widely recognized origin of university outreach in the U.S. is the First Morrill Act of 1862, which laid the foundation for publically funded land grant universities by providing federal land and resources for the teaching of agricultural and vocational skills (Bromley 2007, p.13). The Morrill Act was subsequently expanded through Progressive era reforms including the Hatch Act of 1887, which mandated agricultural extension programs at rural land grant colleges, and the Second Morrill Act of 1890, which funded the seventeen historically Black land grant universities in segregated states (Bromley 2007, p.13; Fisher 2005). Beyond funding outreach and training programs, the Morrill

Act expanded the missions of land grant universities; no longer solely dedicated to knowledge production, they took on a public service mission (Bromley 2007, p.13; Fisher 2005). Though it took form through an expert-driven technical assistance model rather than a community-led process, land grant universities contributed to the economic development and welfare of their regions (Boyle and Silver 2005, see also Harkavy 1999).

In urban areas, university engagement in community development and social welfare can be traced the Settlement House movement (Harkavy and Puckett 1994, Bromley 2007). In mid 19<sup>th</sup> century London, settlement houses were sometimes religious charitable initiatives that aimed to alleviate and disperse poverty by bringing wealthier people to live in the slums. With Toynbee Hall, a mixed class housing and social service institution as the most notable example, settlement houses provided shelter, education, sanitation, and ostensibly positive cultural influences to the poor (Bromley 2007, p.13), forming the basis for early social work and public health practice.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Settlement House Movement was spreading to North America, newly engaging U.S. universities in initiatives to address urban poverty. The horrendous conditions of immigrants living in industrial cities had been brought to the attention of the mainstream public through the exposure of Jacob Riis in his book *How the Other Half Lives*. With a more secular character, the U.S. Settlement House movement emphasized social reform and improvements to unjust housing conditions (Bromley 2007). The most renowned model was the Hull House in Chicago, established

by Jane Adams, which provided opportunities for students and faculty from the University of Chicago to live in the slums while delivering health, educational, and social services, providing job training, and conducting participatory action research (Bromley 2007). Hull House and its partnership with University of Chicago provided inspiration to other universities to address urban poverty. Seth Low, president of Columbia University (1880-1901), articulated an early vision of an ‘engaged university,’ declaring a responsibility to promote social welfare in New York City (Fisher 2005).

Many of the reforms associated with the Progressive Era were set back after World War I. As the post-war economy boomed, there was a shift away from collective action, heightened by the scapegoating of the Red Scare, and towards an increased emphasis on individual responsibility (Fisher, Fabricant, and Simmons. 2005). Many universities moved away from social reform initiatives, prioritizing positivist approaches to scientific knowledge and research (Checkoway 2001, Fisher et al 2005).

By the 1930’s, the economy had again collapsed, and the Great Depression era was marked by a revival of a militant workers’ movement and renewed struggles for social reform. While there would not be additional federal investment into universities until after World War II, the upheaval of this period redirected some universities toward more external engagement. Internally, this period was marked by debates about the role of universities in a democratic society, with Walter Lippman calling for an ivory

tower that would train experts to provide information to direct society, and Dewey positing universities as institutions that should foster participatory democracy through debate, deliberation, and the education of ordinary people (Fisher 2005, Demers 2011, p.57).

### **Rise of the Modern Research University**

Ideological tensions between elitist positivism and democratic pragmatism continued to play out at universities in subsequent decades, and increased federal funding after World War II enhanced these contradictions. The GI Bill brought massive federal investments to universities to expand access to veterans, and in the 1960's the anti-poverty initiatives of the Great Society encouraged and enabled universities to play more prominent outreach roles (Fisher 2005). Yet paradoxically, one of the outcomes of this growth was that universities amplified their emphasis on the professionalization and the institutionalization of academic disciplines. Even while they were funded for outreach, modern research universities were increasingly straying from their civic missions, seeing themselves as engines of scientific research (Checkoway 2001).

### **Radical Social Movements of the 1960's and 70's**

The 1960's and 70's were periods of profound social transformation in the U.S. The contradictions of the urban crisis forced universities to face their relationship to surrounding communities, navigate their role in the War on Poverty, and negotiate with students who were shutting down campuses

to fight racism and war. While the Equal Opportunity legislation had overturned some elements of racial segregation in education, urban rebellions and student movements from New York to Los Angeles challenged the legitimacy of the walled off ivory tower (Boyle and Silver 2005).

Some universities opportunistically leveraged the urban crisis to advocate for federal land grant funding to be expanded to urban areas, under the auspices of university efforts to address poverty. This eventually led to the passage of Title XI, legislation funding the national Urban Grant University Program (Bromley 2007). Other universities initiated efforts to promote community development, such as payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTS) and outreach programs, and began to re-frame their role as stakeholders or anchor institutions that could play a positive role in urban communities (Bromley 2007). Despite their intentions, the legitimacy of these efforts was highly contested; in the era of community action programs and militant social movements, university administrations and any 'expert' attempts to forge solutions to social problems were often seen as elitist and irrelevant (Boyle and Silver p.238).

The radical student movements of this period demanded more grassroots approaches to break down the walls between universities and their communities. Early movements for African American, Asian American, Native American, Chicano, and Women's Studies programs critiqued the elitism and separation of universities from everyday people's struggles, and envisioned a role for universities in helping students contribute to these

social movements (Jennings 2000). Some Women's and Ethnic Studies advocates saw themselves as essentially building an academic wing of a social movement, rather than a discipline (Salper 2014).

For many students who were themselves working class, people of color, and/or women, there simply was no real separation between their lives as students and their lives as movement activists and community members. The San Francisco State University (SFSU) student strike of 1968-1969 offers an important reference point for understanding the community embeddedness advocated by radical students during this period. Led by the Black Student Union and the Third World Liberation Front, a campus coalition comprised of African American, Asian American, Chicano, and Native American students, the strike demanded changes in admissions policies that would allow equal access to higher education for people of color, increased hiring and promotion of faculty of color, and a curriculum that represented the history and culture of ethnic minorities. Lasting five months, it was the longest student strike in U.S. history, and resulted in the first Ethnic Studies program in the nation. Many students politicized during these strikes became increasingly involved in community-based organizing efforts and in broader third world liberation struggles of the time ("Third World Student Strikes at SFSU & UCB 1968-1969").

The demands of Black students of the SFSU strike generalized a broader call for an education that was historically and politically relevant, one that was informed by struggles of Black communities and useful in

helping students to contribute to their communities, and early efforts to pursue ‘community-based research’ were embedded in this political dynamic (Jennings 2000). In the tradition of DuBois, advocates for Black studies saw the development of Black intellectuals as fundamental to the construction of the Black Liberation movement, with community service as a core curricular method. Jennings elaborates on the service origins of black studies through an analysis of one of its founding scholars, Maulana Ndabezitha Karenga (2000, p. 183):

Discussing the early pedagogy of black studies, Karenga explains that a major and ‘early objective’ of the advocates of black studies was the ‘cultivation, maintenance, and continuous expansion of a mutually beneficial relationship between campus and the community ... The intent here was to serve and elevate the life conditions and the consciousness of the community and reinforce the student’s relationship with the community through service and interaction.

Connected to the struggles of this period, new programs formed at universities and community colleges, programs which aimed to develop leadership in working class and oppressed communities, and to forge greater links between theory and practice through community-based research and partnerships. One example was SFSU’s Community Services Institute, which in 1966 developed work-study programs that brought students into direct engagement with community-based organizations as they earned course credit to volunteer in urban communities. The idea behind this initiative was not to “help” in the settlement house tradition, but to learn from community knowledge, to find “grassroots solutions to social problems,” (Eliassen 2007, p. 77).

Another example of such a program was the College of Public and Community Service (CPCS) at UMass Boston, founded in 1972, whose mission was to:

Extend the land grant mission of the university by focusing on public and community service in urban areas. The college represented a new model for undergraduate professional education built on the idea of building links between understanding and effective action, with ample opportunities for fieldwork and work experience. CPCS developed specific arrangements with anti-poverty organizations and government agencies for instructional and recruitment purposes. (University of Massachusetts Boston, College of Public and Community Service, “Our History”)

One initiative stemming from UMass Boston’s CPCS during this period was Marie Kennedy’s Roofless Women’s Action project, a “leadership development, college access, participatory action research project” (Kennedy 1996, p.9) in which formerly homeless women earned a degree while leading a research project that addressed issues impacting their lives. The goal of this project was to develop a policy platform and social service strategy lead by homeless and formerly homeless women and to develop poor women’s leadership, as well as to “promote participatory action research as a legitimate form of university research and as a terrific opportunity for weaving together faculty, students and external communities” (Kennedy 1996, p.9).

### **University Retrenchment and the Conservative Turn**

Some of these community-based initiatives continued for decades, and ethnic studies programs have become institutionalized at hundreds of universities across the U.S. Yet the community action programs and grassroots social movements through which much of this activity was



generated were hit hard by the recession of the late 1970's and the regressive turn of the conservative era (Boyle and Silver 2005). As President Reagan deemed the War on Poverty a failure, many of the Great Society programs were defunded, and the legitimacy of social welfare itself was called into question. Numerous public service and urban development programs that had once been under federal jurisdiction devolved to the jurisdiction of the states, which now had more flexibility to determine who was 'deserving' and who was 'undeserving.' Devolution was further implemented through President Clinton's 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act, a welfare block grant that, in addition to limiting and regulating poverty assistance, transformed the roles of government in service provision, creating new responsibilities for local government, and nonprofit and private sector institutions (Richard and Gais 2001).

The shedding of the public sector forced universities to become more 'entrepreneurial,' increasingly looking to private sources for funding, and transferring costs through higher tuition and increases in contingent faculty (Fisher 2005), an expenditure restructuring process that is referred to as 'retrenchment.'<sup>2</sup> The growth of the technology sector intensified competition for research funding; whereas universities had once been the primary engines, scientific research was now happening through high tech firms,

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<sup>2</sup> 'Retrenchment' is defined as both "the act of reducing expenditure in order to improve financial stability" and "an extra interior fortification to reinforce outer walls" (collinsdictionary.com)

pharmaceutical companies, and private institutions. Chasing large research and military grants, universities rewarded forms of scholarship that aided in these pursuits, codifying a more inward institutional focus, and marginalizing community-based research and outreach programs, even as the conditions in disinvested neighborhoods were deteriorating. So while the retreat from civic missions during this period was certainly the result of internal university decisions, it occurred within broader political, economic, and ideological dynamics that were restructuring and transforming the roles of universities in society.

## **Part II. Pursuing Civic and Democratic University Missions in the Neoliberal Era**

Since the 1980's, critiques and alternatives to ivory tower elitism and positivist social science have been expressed through various methods, including traditional and engaged scholarship, new forms of curricular practice, institutional partnerships and collaborations, and other programmatic initiatives aimed at democratizing universities. Though there is not a clean delineation, these discussions have contributed to a body of literature on service learning, action and community-based participatory research, the 'scholarship of engagement' (Boyer 1996), and anchor institutions (Goddard and Puukka 2008, Perry et al 2009, Harkavy et al 2012), spanning across disciplines including education, social work, public health, and urban planning. Within planning literature there is a significant body of research evaluating and contextualizing the Community Outreach

Partnerships Centers (COPC), a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development program under the Clinton administration which funded university-based community development initiatives (Dewar and Isaac 1998, Reardon 1998, 2005, 2006; Feld 1998, LeGates and Robinson 1998, Wiewel and Lieber 1998, Schramm and Nye 1999, Baum 2000, Rubin 2000). Though an exhaustive synthesis of this literature is beyond the scope of this paper, a cursory review of theoretical and practical developments of this period helps to further contextualize UEP's approach.

### **Service Learning and Beyond**

Perhaps the most dominant trend of university engagement since the 1980's is service-learning. A pedagogy, teaching strategy, and (generally) a curricular, credit-bearing activity, service learning (SL) programs are designed for students to provide services to local communities for the purpose of developing civic-minded graduates. Service learning first developed in North America and Africa in the late 1960s as experiential learning, and was later coined service-learning in U.S. in 1980s (Hoyt, personal correspondence 2013). As a pedagogy, it emphasizes experiential learning and reflective practice.

Service-learning advocates point to positive research findings such as increased student understanding and appreciation of diversity and enhanced job skills, as well as the development of capabilities such as teamwork, task persistence, empathy, time management, and confidence. Research on SL

suggests it produces students who are more altruistic and culturally competent, and who have stronger leadership and communication skills than their counterparts who have not had SL education. A limitation of the traditional service-learning model is that it is primarily student-centered, focused on student learning outcomes and the service mission of the university, rather than on a social justice practice aiming to transform community conditions (Hoyt 2013).

Since the 1990's, some service learning pedagogies have evolved from a traditional charity or service model to one that encompasses a greater emphasis on long-term community partnership and transformative social change (Angotti, Doble, et al 2012). In his article "Community Service and Civic Education," Harry Boyte (1991) argues for universities to go beyond service learning partnerships and to seek ways to become "part of the community." This tradition of service learning, sometimes termed "Beyond Service Learning," seeks to integrate research, teaching, and service in ways that enhance the development of knowledge (Hoyt 2013). Angotti and Doble (2012 p.3) describe the transformative potential for all participants of this emerging pedagogical trend:

A key concept in this emerging trend towards service learning is *transformation* ... Transformative education will change the educational professional, the student, and the community participants and contribute to the transformation of the built environment, institutions and policies, and social practices that shape the communities where we live and work.

Within this trend of service learning, there has been a call to build more reciprocal and reflexive academic community partnerships (Angotti and Doble, 2012), valuing the contributions of both in constructing a critical praxis.

### **Community-based and Action Research**

A resurgence of interest in democratic approaches to pedagogy and research has surfaced since the 1980's. These practices, sometimes placed under the umbrella of 'community-based research,' are described as collaborative research, practitioner research, action and participatory action research, community-based participatory research (CBPR); collaborative and participatory inquiry (Bray 2000 citing Heron, 1996; Reason, 1988a), and popular and participatory education. Stoecker (2009) delineates the central methods of these strands, with participatory research emphasizing grassroots critical analysis, action research emphasizing reflexive action, CBPR emphasizing community involvement from inception, and popular education focusing on grassroots participation.

Whereas the positivist research paradigm values critical distance from subjects and seeks to produce objective knowledge for its own sake, community-based research, by contrast, is praxis oriented (Greenwood and Levin, 2000), and involves subjects in determining research questions, methods and interpretation. Under this paradigm, research and learning are tools to improve society, and the research process itself must reflect values of

democracy, power sharing, and the centrality of marginalized voices (Ansley and Gaventa 1997).

Community-based research methods reference pedagogical theories such as Dewey's pragmatism (1916), Lewin's organizational psychology (1946), Friere's critical consciousness (1973), Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984), Herron's cooperative inquiry (1996), and Argyris and Schon's organizational learning and reflexive practice (1996). While less recognized, action research is also rooted in the Black liberation social science tradition of the 1960's and 1970's, which rejected the racism of dominant social science research and its exploitation and pathologizing of urban Black communities (Bell 2006). Deeply connected to the Black liberation movement, Black liberation social scientists worked to develop a research practice driven by and in service of Black community development and organizing (Bell 2006).

Action Researchers often allude to Kurt Lewin's famous saying, "If you want to truly understand something, try to change it" (Greenwood 1998). McNiff and Whitehead (2006) describe action research as that which is conducted by practitioners rather than by 'professional' researchers. It uses an action and reflection cycle in which participants "observe-reflect-act-evaluate-modify-move in new direction" (p.9). The purpose is to learn about and evaluate practice, and to create just social orders through understanding social formation. Its methods are improvisational and developmental, informed by the learning through the process. They characterize it as

interpretive (rather than positivist), encompassing an ontological perspective that assumes that the values and world-views of the researchers inform knowledge and practice. Its central purpose is knowledge for action to improve society, and it generates “living theories about how learning has improved practice and is informing new practices” (13).

### **Civic Renewal and the Scholarship of Engagement**

Concerns about the abandonment of university public missions have been expressed through a body of literature calling for their renewal (Boyer 1990, 1994, 1996; Harkavy & Benson, 1998; Checkoway, 1997, 2001). This literature notes the widespread unemployment and civic disengagement of college graduates, the disconnect between scholarship and society, and the waning emphasis on teaching and service at many research universities. Sparked initially by Boyer (1990), who claimed that universities face the possibility of irrelevance if their research is devoid of social value and utility, others have questioned the validity of knowledge produced in a context so divorced from society (Harkavy & Benson 1998).

In addition to these more polemical critiques, scholars have also put forth alternative visions for the roles of universities, and called for institutions to invest in and value public scholarship and service. Most notably expressed through Ernest Boyer’s call for the “scholarship of engagement” (1990, 1996), research universities have been called to expand their conception of scholarship, and to integrate the silos of research,

teaching, and service into a reflexive practice embedded in community (Barker 2004). Strategies suggested include collaborative and community-based research (Checkoway, 1997, 2001), the development of civic capacities in students through service learning and co-curricular activities, and a tenure promotion process that recognizes and rewards rather than disciplines engagement (Checkoway 2001).

Similar to the literature on action and community-based research, these discussions are fundamentally concerned with universities contributing to democracy by democratizing their own practice. They reference the tripartite missions of universities and call for a renewed investment in service and its integration into teaching and research.

### **Anchor Institution Strategies**

Changes in the political economy since the 1980's have elevated the roles of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and universities in public service and community development. In planning and community development fields, universities became seen as 'anchor institutions,' which, because of their fixed location and potential for job generation, have the potential to help revitalize cities suffering from deindustrialization and disinvestment (Perry et al. 2009; Harkavy et al. 2012; Initiative for a Competitive Inner City 2011).

Harkavy and Hodges (2012) argue that universities can help to fill the void in municipal resources caused by federal devolution by partnering with



cities to offer necessary social services, particularly educational programs. Goddard and Puukka (2008) have examined the potential of universities to contribute to regional planning and development, and policies that support this participation. Recognizing the historical tensions and unequal power relationships, some have argued for the participation of universities in planning and community development and the implementation of community benefit agreements that advance the interests and co-evolution of both cities and academic institutions (Initiative for a Competitive Inner City 2011).

Others have had a more critical take on anchor institutions strategies. Fisher (2005) situates the increased interest in the public mission of universities espoused by Boyer and others as part of a wave of responses to this massive restructuring and its consequences. He argues that while renewed university engagement has been positive and long advocated by many urban communities, it is important that it be situated within a broader call for renewed investment in the public sector, not as a replacement for it.

### **Community Outreach Partnerships Centers (COPC)**

A major anchor institution strategy of the 1990's and 2000's was Community Outreach Partnerships Centers (COPC). Initiated in 1994 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the COPC program aimed to elevate the roles of universities in community development by funding them to convene University-Community

Partnerships (UCP's). The theory was that by institutionalizing collaboration between universities and communities, distressed communities could better share in the economic benefits and social capital they provide. HUD invested over \$45 million in more than 100 institutions of higher education, primarily public four-year universities. With many universities placed in cities suffering from disinvestment and deindustrialization, UCP's were an attempt to reverse retrenchment and re-envision university roles as engaged anchors of community development. (Vidal et al. 2002)

The COPC program was designed as public/private partnerships were increasingly being employed for community development. Often referred to as Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI's), federal programs such as the Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community program were implemented through foundation-driven community collaboratives (Vidal et al. 2002). CCI's use a consensus building approach to community change rather than the more militant Alinsky-style community organizing, reminiscent of the 1960's and 70's Community Action Programs (Boyle and Silver 2005, p. 240). Through the COPC program, universities were expected to play similar roles to foundations, as conveners and re-granters.

COPC-funded UCP's frequently formed outreach centers that would serve as a hub of technical assistance services such as neighborhood planning, data sharing and capacity-building for community-based organizations (CBOs), adult education programs, and health or legal services. A cross-site evaluation conducted by the Urban Institute (Vidal et al. 2002)

found that most COPC programs conducted a range of outreach activities not necessarily connected to a larger neighborhood change strategy, while a few undertook more targeted interventions and built sustained and dynamic partnerships with neighborhood groups. Some COPC grants went to universities that did not yet have partnerships in place, while others funded existing long-term partnerships such as East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP) at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Vidal et al. 2002).

A large body of literature evaluates lessons from the experiences of building UCP's under the COPC program. The dimensions of these evaluations vary, and include assessments of their effectiveness in enhancing community development (Reardon 1998, Wiewel and Lieber 1998), characterizations of partnerships (Schramm and Nye 1999), best practices in building partnerships (Reardon 2005, 2007), strategies for institutionalizing partnerships (LeGates and Robinson 1998), and methods of partnership evaluation (Rubin 2000). Others evaluate changing pedagogical approaches and institutional practices (Reardon 2005, 2007; Dewar and Isaac 1998) and student skills and capacities (Reardon 1998, Baum 2000, Feld 1998) generated out of UCP's.

There have also been critical perspectives on UCP's, raising concerns about lack of longevity and internal power dynamics (LeGates and Robinson 1998, Boyle and Silver 2005), promotion of traditional roles of expertise (Hoyt 2010), and insufficient internal assessment (Rubin 2000). Boyle and

Silver (2005) question the democratic potential and even the intention of these initiatives, arguing that “UCPs and CCIs actually serve to reinforce the elite status of these institutions ... by establishing their authority among the disenfranchised.”

Reardon (2007) synthesizes Schramm and Nye’s (1999) analysis of 59 UCP’s, which found the following types of partnerships: *Paternalistic/theory-testing partnerships*, in which universities opportunistically use partnerships to test theory and research about the local economy for the benefit of their own scholarship; *Professional/expertise partnerships*, in which and universities attempt to address issues of concern to community leaders, but under a process they control, and with minimal participation; and

*Empowerment/capacity-building partnerships*, in which as Reardon describes,

[universities] both seek to understand the functioning of the local economy and enhance its operation by involving local residents and university-trained researchers in a reciprocal learning process at each stage in the research and planning process from problem identification to data analysis to program implementation and evaluation. This approach to community/university development partnerships seeks to generate useable knowledge needed to provide better stewardship of the local economy while enhancing the ability of community/university partnerships to work together to solve increasingly complex economic development challenges.

The East St. Louis Action Research Partnership (ESLARP) and MIT at Lawrence stand out as examples of long-term sustained collaborations that worked to support and empower community-based organizations to advance community-driven planning. Since 1987, ESLARP has used an empowerment planning and sustained engagement approach that included action research, technical assistance, community education and capacity-building with

community organizations in East St. Louis (Reardon 1998). Similarly, since 2002 MIT@Lawrence, a service learning partnership of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) has a sustained engagement with community organizations, residents, and youth in Lawrence, a small, working-class city north of Boston. Through dynamic and mutually beneficial relationships it has facilitated collaborative research, neighborhood planning, and development projects (Hoyt, et al 2013). Both of these partnerships received COPC funding, but their partnerships proceeded and extended well beyond the funding cycles. These longer-term and more sustained engagements offer relevant models for UEP.

The literature on UCP's and the COPC program raises important questions about university engagement practices and contributions to community development, as well as the politics of 'expertise', research and knowledge production, pedagogy and reciprocal partnership and learning. Some COPC's went beyond service provision to integrated action research, community leadership development and service learning pedagogy. There are important lessons to be drawn from their successes and failures, especially from those that used the program to build upon and invest in long-term partnerships and community organization.

## Conclusion

In this literature review, I have situated U.S. university engagement historically and politically, and placed Co-learning in context. University engagement assumes that knowledge should improve society, that learning is

shaped through experience, and that education is a practice of democracy. These ideas have diverse theoretical roots from Dewey's pragmatism and DuBois's public intellectualism, to Friere, Lewin, and others. Inspired by these philosophies, university elitism has been contested both internally and externally, in dialectical relationship with broader social and political struggles.

The rise of the 20<sup>th</sup> century modern research university produced a set of contradictions that sharpened the schism between theory and practice and extracted universities from public life. Although federal investment in research was largely responsible for this development, the social movements of the 1960's and 1970's were able to capitalize on these resources for their own goals, at times generating deep community partnerships through popular education, action and community-based research. The conservative backlash of the 1980's reversed many of these gains and brought a new era of university retrenchment. Yet calls for a renewal of university civic missions, experiential learning and community partnership have persisted, even as devolution, privatization, and neoliberal restructuring threaten the democratic basis of universities.

### **Co-learning as a Pedagogy and Practice**

Co-learning challenges some of the assumptions of research universities, most notably the paradigm of positivism, which creates a division between theory and practice and researcher and subject. As a

pedagogical and research method, Co-learning draws upon action research and collective and co-generative inquiry, in which democratic participation is both a goal and method, knowledge creation is contextual and collaborative, technical and grassroots knowledge are equally valued, and the validity of research is tested through practice (Greenwood and Levin 2000). It draws upon popular education, participatory action research, long-term community/university partnership, and the tradition of grassroots knowledge production articulated most clearly by the Black liberation movement.

As a partnership approach, Co-learning seeks to go deeper than some of the COPC university/community partnerships, which were shorter-term, often replicated the expert-driven technical assistance paradigm, and were implemented through discrete projects rather than a larger change strategy. Co-learning advocates a more dynamic approach than traditional service learning, which has been critiqued for its transactional rather than reciprocal partnerships, and emphasis on student learning over community impact. Co-learning seeks to build what Hoyt (2010) describes as ‘sustained partnerships,’ in which a new epistemology arises through a fusion of university and community, research and action. In summary, Co-learning seeks to develop sustained, reciprocal partnerships, a more democratic and transformative pedagogy, and research embedded in practitioner experience.

## Chapter 3: UEP Community Strategies: Stages and Evolution

Though its form has differed and the emphasis has ebbed and flowed, community engagement has been a consistent part of UEP's approach and curricular practice since its founding. In this section, I outline the major stages of UEP's development as a department, and describe the forms of community engagement that defined these periods. I then draw out some themes and lessons based on reflections from UEP faculty as well as my own assessments.

### **1972-1973: Herman Field and the Vision of Program in Urban, Social and Environmental Policy (PUSEP)**

As previously described, the Program in Urban, Social and Environmental Policy (PUSEP) was born out of Herman Field's groundbreaking course in Environmental Planning and Design taught within Tufts' Political Science Department in 1972. Just two years after the first Earth Day, the Clean Air Act, and the formation of the EPA (1970), environmental consciousness was in its early stages in the U.S. With conservation its dominant framework, environmentalism was not commonly associated with urban concerns (Krimsky, personal interview 2015).

In addition to his distinctive urban and environmental approach, Field brought a unique orientation as a practicing planner. As Planning Director for Tufts Medical Center, he navigated a complex relationship with Chinatown, at times straddling conflicting roles as both an institutional and



an advocacy oriented planner who had working relationships with many community, environmental, and health organizations in Boston. Navigating these tensions grounded Field in the nuances of community planning, which would greatly shape PUSEP's values of community collaboration and social equity (Hollister, personal interview 2015).

### **1973-1977: The Formation of PUSEP and the Environmental Training Program for Citizen Advocates**

As a new program within the Political Science Department, PUSEP received very few committed university resources. Along with then Assistant professor Sheldon Krinsky, Field worked to attract external funding for PUSEP research through federal grants geared toward training and leadership development of citizen environmental advocates. After the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act and the first Earth Day, there were growing environmental advocacy groups, with fresh community activists in need of skills and support. Field and Krinsky saw a need and an opportunity to support the emerging but immature environmental movement. By attracting federal resources to support citizen advocacy, they could also build resources for PUSEP (Krinsky, personal interview 2015).

In 1976, PUSEP received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to form the Environmental Training Program for Citizen Advocates. Led by Nancy Anderson of the New England Environmental Network, and administered in conjunction with Tufts' Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs, the program included courses on land use

planning, environmental law, and the first known course on environmental ethics. With some of the leading environmental advocates of the region participating (including the president of the Sierra Club), the Environmental Training Program for Citizen Advocates became an entry point for PUSEP's graduate enrollment, and established its early roots in grassroots community activism (Krimsky, personal interview 2015).

### **1977-1979: Increasing Visibility of PUSEP**

In the late 1970's, faculty in PUSEP continued to attract external funding and conducted some high profile research projects. In 1978, Krimsky was awarded major grants from National Science Foundation and Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), which, as he stated, helped elevate the program's "caché." Bratt described the FIPSE program, similar to the DOE funded Environmental Training Program, as "tools to advance PUSEP's mission, fund some of our course work, and promote our efforts in civic engagement (personal interview 2015)."

We were the start-up in the area, as opposed to Harvard and MIT, and had a small number of students. It was important to get visibility. We had a clear focus on environmental issues and community activism, and we used the research grants and trainings of grassroots activists to "opportunistically to get on the map."

PUSEP's scholarship emphasized community engagement in technical decisions and risk assessment, and faculty and students often worked collaboratively on high profile community projects. Two notable examples were a report Krimsky conducted with students to assess potential well-head contamination by the chemical company W.R. Grace in Acton, MA (Krimsky

1981) and one that Kenneth Geiser led on environmental contamination in Woburn (Urban and Environmental Policy, Tufts University, 1980). Hollister describes these reports as “exemplars of a larger body of projects of this period that were lead by professors, but built into student curricular activity... They had some significant impact, and were an outgrowth of deep long-term community partnerships, substantial student participation and combined accountability to teaching, research and to external partners.”

By 1979, PUSEP had effectively “put itself on the map,” becoming the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy (UEP) in the School of Arts & Sciences in 1980. This status would bring both increased resources and increased institutional pressures that would impact the program in significant ways.

### **1980-1983: Establishment of UEP**

In its early years as an independent department, UEP worked to grow resources so it could provide its own core curriculum. As professors Krinsky, Plough, and Bratt were awarded tenure, Robert Hollister became the founding chair of the department. In 1980, with the Department of Political Science, UEP helped form the Program in Public Policy and Citizen Participation (PPCP), which would offer Masters degrees in Public Policy (eventually administered solely by UEP). It was during this period that UEP first declared its mission as the ‘Education of Practical Visionaries’ (UEP@40, 2013).

While the growth of the department enabled more stability for faculty and resources for teaching and research, it also brought with it some of the consequences of institutionalization, in particular the loss of the early collaborative research culture that had been so central to the formation and spirit of the program. Krinsky describes this tension:

Before UEP was granted departmental status, it was an interdisciplinary program meant to serve as a focal point for policy studies at Tufts. Because of the small size of the program, there was a need for people to work collaboratively on grants. As the program achieved departmental status under Arts and Sciences, this collaborative research culture faded toward research that was more individualized, in order to meet the university's tenure rewards that favored personal achievement.

### **1983-1989: Collaboration and conflict with Lincoln Filene Center**

As UEP was developing as a department, another institution at Tufts, the Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs, was growing as well. Founded in 1954, the Filene Center worked to “increase the will and capacity of individuals and organizations to build healthy communities through active citizenship and public service ... education, training, and research in the nonprofit and voluntary sectors and through the promotion of public service as both a vehicle and an arena for lifelong learning” (Sauer et al 2000). While its initial focus was on improving civic education in schools, in the 1970's the Filene Center evolved into a broader mission and program that began to overlap with UEP's. As Hollister described, while “the politics of the institutions were different, they shared a common interest in working collaboratively with community partners in public affairs, yet the overlap in their areas of focus caused them to “became both partners and competitors” (personal interview 2015).

One notable example of how this tension played out was through development of the Institute for Management and Community Development (MCDI). In the early period of Community Re-investment Act, there were significant external resources available to support community development initiatives (Hollister, personal interview 2015), and in 1984, UEP Assistant Professor Richard Schramm used some of these to form MCDI, a 1-2 week summer institute offering “training and networking to organizations and individuals engaged in community development, neighborhood revitalization, social services delivery, and social justice” (Stokes 1998). Training over 500 participants per year for 15 years, MCDI offered 38 one-four day interactive courses on organizational management and administration, affordable housing development, leadership and organizing, and community economic development for the nonprofit and community development sectors (Stokes 1998).

In his co-authored book *Building Higher Education-Community Development Corporation Partnerships* (Nye and Schramm 1999, p.18), Schramm describes the early administration of MCDI, which began as a project of UEP and later shifted to the Filene Center:

MCDI survived for several years through volunteered faculty time, free use of some department services, and creative accounting to avoid the overhead contributions the university usually expects from its programs. As it grew in size and financial strength, MCDI moved to the University’s Lincoln Filene Center where it fit well within the center’s interdisciplinary adult education and community development programs and with its budget and fund raising systems.

In Hollister’s view, “MCDI was a high point in UEP’s community engagement efforts; it was ‘co-owned’ by community participants who co-taught courses,

and an advisory committee of teachers and practitioners convened regularly to set programmatic direction” (personal interview 2015).

Yet despite MCDI’s popularity and impact, Schramm was not awarded tenure. In Hollister’s assessment, “his focus on the training of community development practitioners meant that he was not doing the academic publishing that an arts and sciences tenure promotion process rewarded” (personal interview 2015). Community partners involved with MCDI were outraged by this decision, and in Hollister’s view, Schramm’s departure and the fallout was a low point in UEP’s community engagement work. For similar reasons during this period, Assistant Professor Ken Geiser, who did community-based research on toxic chemicals, was also denied tenure. After Schramm’s departure, MCDI operations shifted to the Filene Center under the leadership of co-founder Nancy Nye, where some programs remained until 1999 (Hollister 2015).

UEP and Lincoln Filene Center continued to negotiate and navigate their overlapping arenas. In 1986, the Program in Public Policy and Citizen Participation (PPCP) was absorbed into UEP, and Lincoln Filene took on the coordination of non-degree training programs. To address the needs that had been previously filled by Schramm’s work in MCDI, the Filene Center formed the Center for Public Service (CPS). While there was some initial effort to get UEP to merge with CPS as a public policy program under the umbrella of UEP and the Political Science Department, ultimately CPS became a program of the Filene Center (Hollister, personal interview 2015).

Another dimension of the overlap between UEP and the Filene Center was Hollister's dual role as both UEP Chair and Director of the Filene Center. In 1989 Hollister shifted to solely directing Filene Center, bringing some projects he had previously worked on through UEP. In subsequent years, many "UEP issues" were increasingly addressed through the Filene Center, such as the Goldberg seminars, a multi-sector action planning project that for 15 years mobilized leaders in Boston to address social issues (Hollister, personal interview 2015).

A decade later in 1999, Hollister co-founded and became Dean of the College of Citizenship and Public Service (CCPS), which built upon and merged with the Filene Center, and in 2006 became the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. While UEP was only modestly involved in this development, CCPS's mission was to promote "UEP type work" more broadly at Tufts, and there was some discussion of a merger with UEP (Hollister 2015). UEP faculty were concerned CCPS would not provide as strong a base as the School of Arts and Sciences, and a merger, if it happened, would give them less autonomy (Hollister, 2015). Hollister noted that "while this decision served the department in its current organizational setup, it perhaps deprived it of resources" it might have been able to access as part of CCPS and later Tisch College.

### **1990's-early 2000's: Departmental Consolidation and Development of MPP Neighborhood Fellows**

Bratt characterizes the period of the 1990's to early 2000's as the "consolidation and development of the academic strengths of the department (personal interview, 2015). When she became chair in 1995, Bratt set out to stabilize UEP's core faculty, which at that time consisted of only 2.4 people including herself, Sheldon Krinsky, and Fran Jacobs, who had a dual appointment with The Elliot Pearson School of Child Development. While Hollister still had an academic appointment at UEP, he was focused on his role as Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (serving from 1996-2001), as well as with the Filene Center (Bratt 2015).

Under Bratt's leadership, UEP's tenured faculty expanded to include James Jennings and Julian Agyeman, both of whom were African American scholars. UEP achieved accreditation as a graduate planning program, created new community certificate programs, and brought in Professors of the Practice, including Melvyn Colon, a long-time community development practitioner in Roxbury. During this period, UEP also established the Master of Public Policy (MPP) mid-career degree program for which Jennings became the Director

Having previously served as the Dean of UMass Boston's College of Public and Community Service, an experiential social justice-based adult learning program, Jennings brought a strong community-based orientation. He saw the MPP program as "a vehicle that could promote UEP's 'community



embeddedness.’ He believed that it was important to “challenge the academic monopoly on research and scholarship and the ivory tower’s dichotomy between theory and practice” and stressed the importance of “addressing institutional barriers, and decentralizing and democratizing credentialing” (Jennings, personal interview 2015). Jennings further believed that part of how UEP could prepare students to work in urban areas was by bringing grassroots urban leaders into the university, offering them credentialing opportunities while enabling students to learn from their experience. Toward this end, he formed MPP Neighborhood Fellows Program.

In 2002 under Provost and Senior Vice President Jamshed Bharucha’s leadership, there was increasing discussion about the limited racial and ethnic diversity at Tufts, as well as ineffective retention of African American male students. Additionally, within UEP there were 6-7 white students who raised major concerns about the lack of diversity in the department, expressing their view that the homogeneous learning environment was not preparing them to work in urban neighborhoods (Jennings 2015).

During a meeting with African American faculty, Provost Bharucha asked to be informed if there was a student of color who wanted to attend Tufts but could not afford to. A week later Jennings happened to hear from a student in this situation. After contacting Bharucha, Jennings was able to not only grant a full tuition waiver to this student, but also got a commitment for five full waivers per year, opening the door to UEP’s MPP Neighborhood Fellows program (Jennings, 2015). In addition to increasing accessibility,

Jennings had a broader perspective on what this program could (and did) contribute to Tufts and UEP:

I felt that we needed to go beyond thinking about accessibility through financial aid and do more to actively recruit practitioners who we think will add value [to the learning environment]... If we are talking about preparing students to work in the field, their education is limited by this lack of access. We need to redefine 'excellence' as something that cannot exist *without* diversity and access; this was part of the philosophy of MPP. Having some of these practitioners [brought in through the Neighborhood Fellows Program] really changed the discourse and how we saw the problem.

### **2000-2008: Growth and New Directions in Community Engagement**

As UEP grew its tenured faculty, student enrollment, and staff, the program was able to invest in community strategies and partnerships in new ways. In 1999, Julian Agyeman joined the UEP faculty as an Assistant Professor. With his interests in the urban environment, faculty hoped he would help to bridge its internal gap between social policy and environmental affairs. His interests in sustainability were different from the dominant discourse at the time, incorporating analyses of communities and environmental justice, what he called 'just sustainability.' His first book focused on expanding the concept of just sustainability through a case study of Roxbury-based environmental justice organization, Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE). Through this research, Agyeman built a relationship with ACE's then director Penn Loh, and eventually invited him to take over the teaching of his Environmental Justice course (Agyeman, personal interview 2015).

After receiving tenure in 2006, Agyeman became chair of UEP in 2008. Eager to support Loh's role at UEP, he applied for funding for a "Professor of

the Practice" position, through which the School of Arts and Sciences awarded Loh a 5 year contract. During this period, Agyeman was becoming increasingly interested in developing a 'community-centered curriculum' for UEP. After a leadership transition at Arts and Sciences, Agyeman proposed that Loh's position become stabilized through a longer-term contract. Loh then became a lecturer, Director of the MPP program, as well as Director of Community Practice, a new position intended to develop UEP's community strategies (Agyeman 2015).

### **2009-2015: The Practical Visionaries Workshop**

Loh began UEP's community strategies development with a needs assessment, completing interviews with core faculty and eight of the community partners he already knew, and eventually developed a framing strategic plan. There were two models that inspired Loh's thinking: the Community Scholars program hosted by UCLA's Department of Urban Planning and Labor Center, and the Co-Lab's Community Fellows program at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning. UCLA's Community Scholars program formed after the 1992 Rodney King verdict as part of an effort to support participatory community development and grassroots leadership. MIT Co-Lab's Community Fellows program was an outgrowth of an initiative Mel King developed in the 1970's that brought accomplished practitioners from across the country for a funded learning year. Having participated in the first cohort of MIT Co-Lab's later version of the Mel King

fellowship, Loh believed that though MIT's program was doing powerful work nationally, it was less engaged locally. He envisioned UEP forming a “Co-Lab for the Boston area,” though he admitted he had no idea how complicated it would be to generate that level of resources from a university (Loh, personal interview 2015).

In the spring of 2010, Loh presented his community strategies proposal to UEP faculty, which included raising the visibility of UEP’s existing community work, strengthening internal linkages by better coordinating field projects with internships and theses, establishing a system of community credits, and creating a “Center for Practical Visionaries.” He envisioned the Center for Practical Visionaries as learning experience for both students and community partners--a “co-learning space” (Loh personal interview 2015).

After receiving support for the proposal, Loh began planning for the pilot of this center, calling it the Practical Visionaries Workshop (PVW). He built a Steering Committee consisting of ACE, SCC, and DSNI, and recruited students and other community partners. The theme he chose for PVW was “community driven planning and strategies for a ‘justainable’ city,” which he felt was closely aligned with the work of partner organizations:

While I chose the theme, it was deeply informed by my experience at ACE and with the Green Justice Coalition, as well as my work on a report discussing the connection between Environmental Justice and the Green Economy; these were live questions at the time. While I take credit for developing the frame out of that experience, it felt in sync with the work our partners were focused on.

Loh launched PVW in the spring of 2011, convening students and community partners monthly over a 6 month period to discuss selected readings and material. After developing a shared framework, the group collaborated on a project, culminating in two reports, “Community Control Over Development in Boston: A conceptual framework, brief history, interviews, case study, assessment methodology, and resources,” and “Green Stormwater Management in the Blue Hill Avenue Triangle Area,” as well as an essay on organizing authored by Juan Leyton and Wilnelia Rivera. Loh described the project element as more challenging than the initial learning sessions:

It was a struggle to scope out [a project] collectively. For students it felt too nebulous, and for the partners, it was a challenge to figure out how it related to their existing work. While a few partners remained engaged during this phase, we also lost some because of lack of time and capacity.

The following fall, Loh was recruited to teach the UEP Field Projects course and to help re-design its curriculum through a more studio-based format. He saw an opportunity to integrate PVW into the core curriculum while piloting a new way of doing Field Projects. He decided that in the next iteration of PVW, students and community partners would continue to do joint learning collectively, but students would conduct the project (Loh, personal interview 2015). That spring, as Walmart was proposing to build a grocery store in ‘food desert’ areas in Boston and Somerville, PVW partners decided to address the question: “What is the potential for Boston area base-building organizations to drive development of a new community economy in the food sector?” The student Field Project team produced a report

entitled, “If Not Walmart, than What?: Envisioning a Different Paradigm for Local Economic Development in Roxbury and Somerville,” which explored potential for a localized food economy driven by cooperatively owned businesses (Loh 2015).

In 2013, PVW partners wanted to develop tools to bring the learning about food economy back to the membership of their organizations. The 2013 Field Project produced a popular education curriculum, “Cultivate Your Food Economy,” that they facilitated that summer with youth members of ACE, SCC, and DSNI. With DSNI, students also conducted an action research project documenting resident gardens in the Dudley triangle. In 2014, the student Field Project team expanded on these tools and data to support DSNI and ACE in designing a community food action planning process which they completed in early 2015. In the spring of 2015, a Field Project team did a case study of this planning process. PVW has now engaged 26 graduate students and 28 community participants from 17 groups in Boston, Chelsea, and Somerville (Loh 2015).

An additional element of PVW now woven into UEP as a whole is the Visiting Practitioners Program, which formed in 2012 to bring in community leaders, comparable to visiting scholars. Sonja Spears, a mediator and retired judge who served on the New Orleans civil bench for twelve years, served in this role; she taught an Experimental College course entitled, ‘Accused: The Gap between Law and Justice,’ exploring the sharp contrast between the concepts of law and justice in the US. In 2013, Juan Leyton, a

UEP MPP alumnus, and Aaron Tanaka, a former executive director of an organizational partner of the Practical Visionaries workshop, partnered in this role to share lessons from community-driven efforts to build more democratic, sustainable and just economies from Boston and Mondragon (Loh 2015).

The Practical Visionaries Workshop has helped to institutionalize new and deeper forms of engagement and partnership at UEP, and has served as a pilot of the Co-learning model UEP to seeks to expand. While PVW builds upon UEP's long tradition of engagement, several specific developments made possible its implementation. Loh's deep roots in Boston's environmental justice and community development sectors, as well as his experience as Executive Director at ACE and hosting UEP field projects, gave him a unique perspective and set of relationships from which UEP benefitted. Loh's entry point into Tufts was unique as well, a result of Agyeman's recruitment of him first as an instructor of the EJ class, then as Professor of Practice, and then as Lecturer, an advocacy that was itself a form of engaged practice. Agyeman's creation of the Director of Community Practice position for Loh created space for UEP to develop a vision and strategy for a community-centered curriculum, which was enhanced by UEP's internal flexibility in moving PVW from a co-curricular activity to a core part of the curriculum. Loh described the intention of PVW as a co-learning space:

PVW workshop was structured around how you create a learning experience that's valuable for both partners and students. What's evolved is deepening what we mean by co-learning—thinking about research as a form of co-learning. As I stayed in university longer, the way research was framed bothered me: that it's set apart

from practice, that there has to be a separation between thinker and doer. For some in academy research has to be “new,” but new to whom? To me what’s important is that we’re going through a critical learning process. To me, co-learning is a frame that encompasses this.

### Community Engaged Learning and Practice at UEP

Though it has been diverse in form and at times without a coherent strategy, community engagement has been a foundation of UEP’s work. Political context, the developmental phase of the department, specific faculty roles, and departmental leadership were significant factors in how engagement has occurred. The sustainability of these efforts has been highly linked to faculty tenure, hiring, and the institutional needs of the department.

From inception, field work has been part of UEP’s core curriculum and served as a pipeline for community engagement. UEP faculty have frequently conducted engaged research; the program has often recruited professors of the practice, some of whom, like Melvyn Colon and Penn Loh, came directly from community organizations. As Bratt described, UEP has always hired faculty with strong social justice values, many of whom sought to connect their work and expertise to progressive policy efforts (personal interview, 2015).

UEP’s early efforts through the Environmental Advocacy Program and high profile environmental cases rooted it in community-based environmental advocacy. Later, Schramm’s work with MCDI embedded UEP in Boston’s network of community development practitioners. In addition to



providing vehicles for community work, these initiatives were pipelines for engaged students and professors of the practice.

UEP's affiliation with the School of Arts and Sciences was instrumental for its stability and capacity to grow resources, yet it brought with it other institutional pressures. The system of tenure that rewards individualized and peer reviewed research brought more tenured faculty to UEP, but also resulted in some losses of core and beloved faculty, and came at the expense of the more collaborative forms of engaged research through which UEP had made itself known. These dynamics were expressed most notably through Geiser and Schramm's denials of tenure and the subsequent fallout from the MCDI program.

After UEP solidified itself as a department, it was able to grow and innovate in its engagement work in the 2000's. The Neighborhood Fellows program, support for Penn Loh's position, and the development of the Practical Visionaries workshop reinvigorated the community-based culture of the program and created new vehicles for sustained engagement as well as pipelines for recruitment of community practitioners who have often been students of color.

More broadly, UEP has helped to shape an engaged culture and commitment to active citizenship across the university. As Hollister described,

Over time department has moved from fledgling to well-established operation, better understood by the university. It was different from typical Arts & Sciences department. Today, there is a better understanding in and outside Tufts of

community engaged research, scholarship, and teaching. UEP has made this happen alongside the broader trend of community-engaged research taking off.

Yet UEP has been challenged by the ways that, despite their intentions, universities tend to separate scholarship from community service. This tension played out at Tufts in relation to the Lincoln Filene Center (and later Tisch College). Hollister noted that while UEP's status as an independent department afforded it autonomy and resources for faculty, it has perhaps limited its resources for engagement (personal interview 2015). The next section will discuss some of the experiences of community engagement from the perspective of a few of UEP's long-term partners.

## Chapter 4: Reflections from UEP's Community Partners

While UEP has engaged dozens of community partners through field projects and faculty research, four organizations stand out in their longevity and consistency. These include Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), Chinese Progressive Association (CPA), and Somerville Community Corporation (SCC). The groups have participated in formal collaborations and have been vehicles for more informal cross-pollination, with UEP alumni joining their staff, and some staff joining UEP as students or as professors of practice. DSNI, ACE, and SCC are founding Steering Committee members of the Practical Visionaries Workshop, and CPA a founding participant. The longevity and multiple avenues of these collaborations form the basis for the 'reciprocal partnerships' that UEP hopes to build upon. In this section I will provide an overview of these four core partners, describe the ways they have partnered with UEP, and share some of their insights and reflections from these experiences, as well as their visions for long-term partnership.

### UEP's 'Core' Partners

#### **Chinese Progressive Association (CPA)**

The Chinese Progressive Association is a grassroots community organization based in low-income Chinese immigrant communities in Boston, particularly in Chinatown, the densely populated neighborhood

where Tufts Medical Center and School of Medicine are located. Residents in Chinatown have struggled for decades over displacement, from urban renewal and the construction of I-93 and the Mass Turnpike, and more recently from gentrification and land speculation. CPA was founded in 1977 as an outgrowth of struggles for community control over land development in Chinatown, as well as through Chinese parent organizing in the Boston school desegregation process. CPA has since developed a multi-issue platform that addresses the conditions of low-wage workers, residential displacement, environmental justice, and community driven development.

CPA's relationship with Tufts has had an unusual trajectory, beginning with a land use confrontation. In the 1980's the expansion of Tufts University Medical School and New England Medical Center (which later merged) were putting additional pressures on Chinatown. The BRA had granted New England Medical Center the right to purchase Parcel C, a site in the center of Chinatown. To support its expansion, New England Medical Center hoped to build a parking garage on this site, and made three attempts to do so, first in 1986, then in 1988 and then again in 1993. In response to Chinatown's organizing, the BRA handed over the land title to the Quincy School Community Council in 1988. New England Medical Center sued the BRA in response, gaining rights to two adjacent plots as part of a settlement. In 1993, when New England Medical Center proposed building a parking garage a third time, the cash-strapped BRA supported the move, and a government council funded by New England Medical Center ruled in its favor March. In

response, 2,500 community members, anchored by CPA, voted against the project in a referendum and through organizing, ultimately stopped the medical center's proposal. In the final agreement, the City of Boston and the BRA worked with the Chinatown community to develop a mixed-use site with 251 housing units; the Metropolitan was completed in 2002 (Leung 1995).

After this confrontation ended and Tufts' expansion slowed, CPA and Tufts built a more collaborative relationship. CPA did a number of field projects with UEP throughout the 90's and 2000's, including a housing inventory, a scan of community stabilization policies, and research for a Chinatown library campaign. Additionally, CPA partners with Tufts through other avenues including Tisch summer fellows, the Tisch scholars program, service learning projects with Professor Jean Wu's Asian American studies class, and most prominently through a long term CBPR project with Professor Doug Brugge, through the Tufts Community Research Center, conducting a community assessment of health impacts from highways and design mitigation from highway exposure. CPA staff have participated in the Practical Visionaries Workshop since its founding, and most recently CPA is part of anchoring a collaborative field project on Community Land Trusts. . (Lowe 2015).

### **Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI)**

Based in Boston's Roxbury and North Dorchester neighborhood, DSNI is a community-based planning and organizing group that formed in 1986 to rebuild a neighborhood devastated by urban renewal, redlining, and disinvestment. DSNI gained control of neglected land through eminent domain rights, forming a land trust upon which it has built housing, a park, a greenhouse, gardens and a charter school. It has grown into a membership-based collaborative of over 3,000 residents, businesses, non-profits and religious institutions that work to revitalize and maintain the long-term affordability of the Dudley neighborhood.

UEP began partnering with DSNI in 1990 through a field project conducting a community needs assessment, the first of eleven field projects on topics ranging from vacant land development and brownfield remediation to urban agriculture and school readiness. UEP and DSNI have also partnered through student internships and masters' theses. Several DSNI staff and members have enrolled as students in UEP, including long-time senior staff member May Louie and former Executive Director John Barros. Trish Settles, a 1994 UEP alum became DSNI's staff environmental organizer for more than a decade after working with them as a graduate student, supported by Professors of the practice Pat Hynes and Melvyn Colon, both of whom had long-term relationships with DSNI (Settles 2015).

DSNI was a founding Steering Committee member of the Practical Visionaries Workshop, helping to anchor early projects envisioning new community economies in the food sector and alternatives to Wal-Mart, and

the 2013 popular education curriculum – Cultivate Your Food Economy. Students worked with DSNI on an action research project documenting resident gardens in the Dudley triangle, and in 2014 helped DSNI, with ACE, to design a community food action planning process of which a current Field Project team is conducting a case study. Most recently, DSNI is anchoring a collaborative field project on Community Land Trusts (Loh 2015).

### **Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE)**

ACE formed in 1993 to address environmental justice issues with communities across Massachusetts through organizing and legal advocacy. While initially led by lawyers, ACE transitioned into a membership-led base building organization, anchored in Roxbury but engaged in coalitions across Greater Boston, Lowell, Lawrence, and New Bedford, and supporting a regional EJ movement in New England. ACE's mobilization of legal and scientific resources in support of organizing has become a model for environmental work throughout the U.S., connecting issues such as hazardous waste sites, brownfield remediation and dirty diesel exhaust with efforts for transportation justice and community control of land. It has built a transit riders union that successfully advocated for busses to run on cleaner fuels, and has taken vacant lot redevelopment into its own hands through guerrilla gardening. Its Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project is held as a model for youth leadership in the environmental justice movement. (ACE 2015)

UEP's relationship with ACE formed primarily through Penn Loh, who prior to UEP worked in multiple roles at ACE from 1996-2009, including as Executive Director from 1999-2009. Loh interacted with UEP alumni in environmental efforts throughout the region including Trish Settles at DSNi, Lois Adams at the EPA, and Jodi Sugerman-Brozan at Save the Bay and Warren Goldstein-Gelb, both of whom eventually became part of ACE's staff. Veronica Eady, also a former ACE Executive Director, joined UEP as a field projects instructor several years after leaving ACE.

Loh's and ACE's relationship with UEP deepened during Agyeman's year-long case study for *Just Sustainabilities* in 2000. During this period, Loh was a frequent guest presenter in Agyeman's EJ class, and ACE hosted the class for site visits and eventually became the vehicle for all of the course's student term projects. ACE hosted a UEP field project on the impacts of the planned bio-terror lab in Roxbury, as well as one that analyzed bus service and helped develop metrics for a transit performance evaluation. As gentrification was intensifying and the Right to the City Alliance was forming, ACE hosted a field project on gentrification threats to the Dudley square area. These reciprocal collaborations sowed the seeds for Loh's hiring as a Professor of Practice at UEP and ACE's long-term engagement.

ACE was a founding Steering Committee member of the Practical Visionaries Workshop participating in early projects envisioning new community economies in the food sector and alternatives to Wal-Mart, and the 2013 popular education curriculum – Cultivate Your Food Economy.



Students worked with ACE alongside DSNI to design a community food action planning process in 2014. ACE is an active participant in the collaborative field project on Community Land Trusts.

### **Somerville Community Corporation (SCC)**

Formed in 1969, SCC is a membership-based community development corporation that works to maintain affordability for low-income and immigrant communities in Somerville. In addition to affordable housing development, SCC does grassroots organizing and anti-displacement work advocacy, and has facilitated participatory community planning in East Somerville and along the corridor of the expected MBTA Green Line Extension.

SCC has partnered with UEP on field projects since 2005, which have ranged in topic from affordable housing along the rail corridors, local food production through small businesses, use of technologies in community planning, and small business displacement. SCC also worked with UEP Professor Justin Hollander to develop community planning tools. Many UEP students have also worked as interns supporting their community planning and development efforts, and like CPA, SCC has consistently collaborated with Tisch College and the Tufts Community Research Center, who see it as an important vehicle through which to support Tufts' surrounding community. SCC was a founding Steering Committee member of the Practical Visionaries Workshop, helping to anchor early projects

envisioning new community economies in the food sector and alternatives to Walmart, and the 2013 popular education curriculum – Cultivate Your Food Economy. SCC is an active participant in the collaborative field project on Community Land Trusts.

### **Community Experiences and Visions for Partnership**

To help inform UEP's vision for co-learning, I interviewed former and current staff of the core community partner organizations described in the previous section. Interview subjects were asked to share reflections from their experiences partnering with UEP, how they would characterize the strengths and limitations, and their visions for future partnership. Interview subjects included Lydia Lowe, Executive Director at CPA; Meridith Levy, Executive Director at SCC; Harry Smith, Director of Sustainable and Economic Development at DSNI, Trish Settles, former Environmental Organizer at DSNI; and Penn Loh, former Executive Director at ACE. In this section, I discuss themes that emerged from these discussions and draw out initial implications for co-learning.

### **Strengths OF UEP-Community Partnerships**

#### ***UEP's development of 'Practical Visionaries' adds value to community work***

Several of the partners reflected that UEP's pedagogical approach, including its practical and applied orientation and its integration of urban and environmental issues, produces thoughtful students that respect community knowledge, and understand the complexity of solving social

problems. In reflecting on her own development, Settles described how UEP's integration of urban and environmental concerns helped her to connect issues and frame her interests in this nexus. This in turn helped her as a DSNI staff member to position DSNI within the emerging EJ movement, connecting issues of housing, public health and cumulative burden (personal interview 2015). She described what this approach contributed to DSNI:

UEP got the bigger picture and wasn't as technocratic as [other urban planning programs]. When we did work with MIT DUSP, they came at it from more of an engineering background. UEP attracts people who are practical, thoughtful, but not overly idealistic, and that was useful to DSNI .... the idea of 'practical visionaries'—being both idealistic and practical .. understanding that you can't fix everything all at once.

### *Collaborative rather than 'expert driven' approach*

All of the partners shared their experience of UEP students and faculty as respectful collaborators who trusted community expertise, seeking to contribute to their work rather than 'fix' it. Smith also reflected on having a "sense of trust in the integrity and practical orientation of students and faculty" at UEP. Levy reflected: In SCC's work with Justin Hollander, we sat on panels together; there's a sense of "we all own this" (personal interview 2015). Smith noted (personal interview 2015):

"There is a sense of trust in the integrity and practical orientation of students and faculty at UEP ... a high quality of students in terms of both knowledge and respect for communities, and willingness to take direction from our organization.

### *Community 'embeddedness' and faculty bridge roles*

Several noted that the overlap between staff and members of organizations and faculty and students at UEP facilitates a sense of community 'embeddedness' and trust. As Smith described, "UEP was built on

trust; having leadership that was organizers reinforces our positive feelings about UEP” (personal interview 2015). Lowe shared that it was important and opportune to have someone like Penn Loh at UEP because of his “hands on understanding.”

Settles added that having Roxbury-based activists like Melvyn Colon, Penn Loh, and John Barros teaching or enrolled as students at UEP deepened the relationship between UEP and DSNI. This overlap helped bridge broader collaboration with Tufts such as with Rachel Bratt on housing issues, and projects with the engineering department (personal interview 2015).

#### *Multiple avenues of collaboration and reciprocal partnerships*

Several noted that multiple forms of engagement over time, such as through student internships, field projects, guest presentations, and faculty collaborations, facilitated trust. For example, in addition to the Practical Visionaries Workshop, DSNI worked closely with James Jennings on data and research for its Promise Neighborhoods proposal. Likewise SCC partnered with Justin Hollander to enhance community participation in planning and visioning through a collaborative project called Open Neighborhoods. Levy described ways that field projects often lead to longer-term engagements with students through their internships or thesis, adding deep value to SCC’s work.

Smith noted that these long-term and more fluid engagements facilitate a more reciprocal relationship:

“We’ve been clear [with UEP] that we can’t change our whole work plan [to accommodate university needs], but we can and want to build a two-way relationship. UEP’s flexibility, openness, and responsiveness has enabled a synchronicity where our programs and university projects can co-develop in sync.”

## Limitations

### *Rigidity of Semester-long discrete projects*

Several partners described the challenges of working within the academic calendar, and the mis-match with the pace of grassroots work. Lowe described the specific challenge of scoping out a field project and supporting students to implement it effectively within the span of a four-month semester:

Time flies [during a semester], first there’s a long scoping process, then you’re orienting the students, then they write it up, you re-discuss it, then you set a few meetings, but by the second meeting you might see a mis-match, but by this point it’s already midterms.

An example of how this played out was through a field project in which students conducted a gentrification policy scan for CPA. CPA hoped the field project would generate new policy ideas, but Lowe reflected that in retrospect it was unrealistic to expect students to answer such political questions in a semester. CPA also knew a lot about the issue already, and so while the students understandably had to spend time learning the context and content, the time constraints and their lack of historical context meant that they were not ultimately able to produce something useful for CPA (Lowe, personal interview 2015)

The other side to this is that sometimes what is actually concretely useful to the organization does not meet the course requirements. After

CPA's experience with the gentrification policy scan, they tried to identify a project that was more concrete and would not require so much knowledge of context. They asked students to create a housing inventory for Chinatown, and they developed a very useful database. However, the professor felt that this project did not qualify as "research," and it was a challenge for the students to turn the project into something that would meet the course requirements (Lowe 2015). SCC also experienced this tension, and felt that field projects are helpful for a discrete research need, but less effective when they are broad or unspecific, or if they are expecting something grandiose or as a replacement for actual staff work (Levy, personal interview 2015).

Another dimension of this tension is that these organizations are relatively small and have limited capacity to mentor students or even to implement the research and recommendations. Lowe described:

For us, it's been a process of learning of how to do this type of collaboration—we are fairly small, within our organization we are already stretched, and don't have a lot of capacity for strong supervision and support for students. This has been a challenge. UEP field projects are a good opportunity to do something more in depth with less supervision required, but it's still a challenge to figure out how to use the research and identify a project that will work.

Settles also discussed the tension between getting university resources and effectively managing them with limited staff, as well as the mismatch of the pace of research with the progression of organizational work.

If there had been more resources at DSNI to manage these resources, we could have made them more fruitful, more productive ... the research would often reveal something useful and provide analysis, but the challenge was how to do something with the research, and how to translate it into the implementation of the organization.

Levy also described how this tension between ideas and organizational capacity played out, even through the more collaborative work in PVW:

Great thinking came out of PVW, it helped us identify a field project, and connect to other university resources like the Tisch scholars. But for us the challenge was that the food economy research was more of an exploration than something we could actually take on ... when it came time to think about implementation is when the project ended.

Community Partner Reflections	
Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical orientation of students adds value</li> <li>• Collaborative rather than 'expert driven' approach</li> <li>• Community 'embeddedness' and faculty bridge roles</li> <li>• Multiple avenues of collaboration and reciprocal partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigidity of semester-long discrete projects</li> <li>• Lack of organizational resources for research and Implementation</li> <li>• Projects are too short-term, don't match organizational cycles</li> <li>• Hard to work-plan around university in-kind resources</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Summary of Findings from community partner interviews

## Community Visions for partnership with Tufts UEP

In their suggestions and visions for on-going partnership with UEP, these community partners emphasized longer-term collaborations and more systematic alignment with their organizational work plans.

### *Long-term Collaborations*

All the partners suggested the utility of longer term projects over 2-3 year blocks of time. As Lowe described:

It takes awhile for people to dig in and get oriented to project and a community enough to make it work ... it would be helpful if the projects could match the timeline of our organizing cycles.

She added that although students are the most consistent resource universities offer, they are generally available for short periods of time. Creating a more flexible framework for field projects that are anchored by long-term faculty could help alleviate this challenge, similar to the model of TCRC.

### *Embedding research and projects in organizational work plans*

Some of the partners also suggested finding ways to better align research projects with organizational work plans. For Levy, she would like to see projects generated out of PVW be attached to a component of SCC's core work plan, but perhaps a new avenue they have not yet explored.

A value of the PVW model is it connects and pushes us to think outside our box. But we have to find the sweet spot between exploring new ideas and being pragmatic about our resources, something that would give us the room to be both innovative and sustainable.

UEP's core partners clarified some of the strengths as well as limitations of collaboration. Deep trusting relationships have evolved through sustained engagement and multiple avenues of collaboration, the 'embeddedness' of faculty and students, and UEP's approach as 'practical visionaries.' Yet the rigidity of university timelines and requirements, and the



mis-match between the demands of university projects and the capacity and resources of partners presents some challenges.

Through co-learning, UEP is working to develop a more coherent engagement strategy that rectifies some of these limitations, while building upon its long-term reciprocal partnerships. In the next section, I will discuss some principles and practices that are part of a framework for co-learning, and the challenges and opportunities of implementing this approach in the current political and institutional context.

## Chapter 5: A Framework for University-Community Co-Learning

Through Co-learning, UEP is articulating a method for a more democratic and transformative approach to pedagogy, research, and partnership. In this section, I offer a framework for an idealized vision for Co-learning and distill some of its core principles and practices. I then discuss some of the opportunities and challenges of implementing this Co-learning vision and practice at UEP and at Tufts. I conclude with some lessons and questions that Co-learning raises for the field of university civic engagement.

Co-learning uses sustained partnerships to co-create knowledge across the boundaries of university and community, research and practice. The figure below describes the cyclical process of Co-learning, and the logical progression of its methods:



**Figure 2: A Framework for Co-Learning**

Sustained partnerships enable university and community to develop shared strategic questions (“Collaborative Inquiry”), from which joint research is generated and conducted (“Collaborative Research”). Research produces ideas for new projects, policies and practices, “Collaborative Action,” through which ideas are tested. University and community then evaluate the validity of research and efficacy of ideas through a joint evaluative summation, “Collaborative Reflection and Evaluation.” This collaborative learning and action process deepens relationships, and leads to new inquiry, from which the cycle repeats.

### **Principles and Practices of Co-learning**

In what follows, I describe some of the principles and practices that underlie an idealized vision for Co-learning,

#### **Long-term Sustained Partnerships**

Co-learning is a practice of sustained engagement (Hoyt 2010) and requires trust and mutual accountability. The process of learning, research, action and reflection occur through consistent interaction over time and in the context of deep, long-term relationships.

#### **Democratizing Research and Pedagogy**

Co-learning invites an inquiry into who has power to determine knowledge. As Ansley and Gaventa (1997 p.46) argue, “researching for democracy also implies democratizing research, a shift that poses a fundamental challenge to many university-based researchers.” In Co-

learning, community partners work as equals alongside students and faculty to develop research questions, determine methods, and interpret findings. They are co-researchers, co-educators, and co-producers of knowledge.

### **Learning through Praxis and from Practitioners**

In Co-learning, the purpose of research is to inform practice, and it is through practice that the validity of research is tested. Knowledge is produced through a cyclical and dialectical process of action and reflection.

### **An Evolving Praxis**

Co-learning is a dynamic process embedded in and responsive to social and political context. It uses flexible methods and an evolving line of inquiry rather than a set program model. While its principles and practices can be adopted, the form it takes depends on the context and conditions; it is not a “model” to replicate. By extension, it should be assessed through *dynamic evaluation approaches* rather than through traditional indicators. It assumes that change is a historical process, and that “community impact” occurs over time and at different scales.

### **Challenging power relations**

Co-learning engages and challenges power differences along race, class, gender, and other social identities, and operates under the assumption that change occurs through a contestation for power. It asks participants to reflect on power differences both in the world and within the practice (Loh

2015), challenging the paternalism of charity and the elitism of university 'expertise.'

### **Addresses Interconnected Social problems**

Co-learning seeks to understand and address problems through integrated social and political frameworks, rather than issue silos. It facilitates joint partnerships across community sectors, and interdisciplinary collaborations in the university.

### **Engagement as Scholarship**

Co-learning spans across research, service, and learning missions of the university, and challenges their distinction. It assumes that engagement is a form of scholarship, and that the purpose of teaching and research is to strengthen democracy. Co-learning contends that action research is deserving of equivalent recognition for its rigor and validity as traditional scholarship.

### **Access as a Basis of Excellence**

Whereas for most universities, community partnership happens separately from diversity and accessibility initiatives, Co-learning connects these. In Co-learning, partnerships are a pipeline for recruitment of community members into universities. This approach is based on the assumption outlined by Jennings (1997) that excellence is not in tension with racial diversity, but rather cannot exist without it. He argues:

Educators have a responsibility to guarantee to white college youth that by the time they leave institutions of higher education they will have an appreciation of black, Latino, and Asian culture. Educators have a responsibility to tell black, Latino, and Asian students that they belong in American colleges and universities, that their thoughts and concerns are important in keeping those colleges and universities vibrant and healthy. Once this is done, the education we give to our students, drawing as it then will upon the full range of this nation's qualities and resources, will realize at last the excellence those students desire and deserve (p.12).

### Implementing Co-Learning in the Department and Across the University

The current political and institutional climate offers challenges and opportunities for Co-learning. I offer some assessment of both for its implementation at UEP and across Tufts University.

#### **Co-Learning at UEP: Opportunities**

Community engagement and social justice are at the core of UEP's mission. While the program's long-term reciprocal partnerships in the environmental justice and community development sectors anchor this method, the support of departmental leadership, faculty, and socially conscious students will help it flourish.

UEP has successfully piloted Co-learning through the Practical Visionaries Workshop, which is now integrated into the core curriculum through field projects and an upcoming community practicum. Tisch College has provided initial support for Co-Learning through graduate summer fellowships with partner organizations, allowing students to extend field projects into internships and thesis work. Additionally, UEP has received

funding through Tufts Innovates to develop a Co-learning and popular education curriculum in partnership with Tisch College, Community Health, and May Louie, MPP alum and former DSNI staff member.

On-going funding for five MPP Neighborhood Fellows has created pipelines for local community practitioners to enroll at Tufts. In addition to providing access to community members, this program helps to increase racial diversity at UEP, and enables students to learn from experienced community practitioners.

### **Co-Learning at UEP: Challenges**

One limitation is that UEP's core partners (DSNI, ACE, CPA, and SCC) are relatively well-resourced community nonprofits, with staffing, capacity, and professional expertise. While this status positions them well for an academic partnership, what would it take for lower capacity grassroots groups to participate as Co-learners? It will be important to reflect on relations within and among community partners as well inside the university.

Additionally, constructing a true level playing field in Co-learning will require resources for community partners for staff time and project implementation. How and from where will these resources be acquired? Without funding sources like HUD COPC, Co-learning will likely require external philanthropic funding. The university needs to develop financing

models that can support communities. Can it work alongside community partners to “co-learn” how to construct this financing?

Implementing Co-learning: at UEP	
Opportunities	Challenges/Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UEP’s history of engaged scholarship, experiential learning, and social justice values</li> <li>• Successful pilot through Practical Visionaries Workshop</li> <li>• Initial support from Tisch College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners are well-established nonprofits rather than grassroots</li> <li>• Need external funding for community groups</li> </ul>

Figure 3: Summary of Challenges and Opportunities for Implementing Co-Learning at UEP

### Co-Learning at Tufts: Opportunities

Co-Learning is consistent with Tufts University’s mission to “provide transformational experiences for students and faculty in an inclusive and collaborative environment where creative scholars generate bold ideas, innovate in the face of complex challenges, and distinguish themselves as active citizens of the world” (Monaco and Harris 2013).



Co-learning is consistent with the strategies outlined in the University's T10 Strategic Plan (Monaco and Harris 2013), such as Themes 2 "Enabling and Integrating Transformational Learning Experiences" and 3 "Engaging and Celebrating Commonalities and Differences" as well as the call



Figure 4: Potential Contributions of Co-Learning to Tufts Strategic Goals

of the Diversity Council on Graduate and Professional students to “*Develop new and increase existing programs that support community engagement by student.*” (Loh 2015).

The schematic above developed by Penn Loh (2015) describes the multiple ways Co-Learning partnerships can contribute to Tufts’ goals. In addition, Co-Learning will also produce research, whether or not it is formally recognized through peer review.

### **Co-Learning at Tufts: Challenges**

Co-learning is undoubtedly in tension with some of the institutional dynamics and the business model of research universities. While Co-Learning may be recognized as a legitimate form of teaching and service, its application as research will be more challenging, as tenure and promotion policies limit its legitimization as scholarship.

While Tufts places great value and devotes significant resources to active citizenship and hosts high profile CBPR projects through Tufts Community Research Center (TCRC), it has been slower to adopt institutional practices that recognize and reward engagement as a form of scholarship (Hollister et al 2006, p.10). More recently, President Monaco has pledged to review the system of incentives and rewards for engaged faculty, and co-authored the Talloires Network Leaders Conference 2014 Call to Action to “Increase acknowledgement and recognition for professors who perform

high quality community-engaged teaching and research, and public service” (Talloires Network Leaders Conference 2014).

Co-Learning will also face challenges in developing evaluative indicators legitimizing its efficacy for learning and community impact. This is a challenge for university civic engagement more broadly, causing the Talloires Network Global Leaders Conference (2014) to call for “further development of tools to document and measure impacts, and grow the collective body of evidence about impacts of university civic engagement – on student learning outcomes and on community conditions.”

Co-learning could help increase racial diversity at Tufts by connecting active citizenship with diversity initiatives, strategies that often operate in silos. With just 3 percent African American and 5 percent Latino students (Krantz 2015), racial diversity is a significant issue at Tufts, and one that the university has pledged resources to address (Monaco and Berger-Sweeny, 2013). Tufts’ BLAST and BRIDGE scholar programs, which support first generation students, could make special efforts to recruit from partner communities in the Boston Area (Loh personal correspondence, 2015). The Tisch Scholars program could similarly help to recruit young people from partner communities. UEP’s MPP Neighborhood Fellows model could essentially be expanded across the university.

However, there is an embedded tension between these efforts and the admission standards of an elite research university like Tufts. As Jennings (1997) has argued, a true de-segregation process in higher education must

challenge the structural inequalities limiting admission. Excellence must be seen as inextricably linked to racial diversity, rather than in tension with it.

Implementing Co-learning: at Tufts	
Opportunities	Challenges/Limitations
<p>Aligned with and can contribute to university mission, goals, <b>and T10 Strategic Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformational learning experiences</li> <li>• Active Citizenship</li> <li>• Increasing Diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to fit with university “business model?”</li> <li>• Faculty tenure and rewards policies</li> <li>• “Measuring Impact”</li> <li>• Access <i>vs.</i> “Excellence”</li> <li>• Embedding Civic Engagement in Academic disciplines</li> </ul>

Figure 5: Summary of Opportunities and Challenges in Implementing Co-Learning across the University

### The Future of Co-Learning

Institutionalizing Co-learning raises some central questions for higher education: What is research, and who defines it? What is the vision for the future of research universities, and who decides? If the scholarship of engagement is truly valued, how might that change the face of the faculty and student body? If change is understood as a historical process, what are implications for assessments of community impact? Adopting a genuine Co-

learning practice will require support for diverse modes of research and teaching, new methods of evaluation, and more flexible institutional practices. It suggests a union of teaching, research, and service into an integrated democratic practice.

Yet even if granted legitimacy as scholarship, Co-learning must navigate partnerships with communities that contest and challenge power, including that of universities. Is a mutual accountability to university and community possible, given the balance of power? Under what conditions could it be practiced, and how?

U.S. communities have not recovered from the conservative backlash of the Reagan era, and progressive social movements lack the power and organizational basis they had in the 1960's and 1970's. The current moment is marked by the politics of neoliberalism, corporate interests, and austerity, posing distinct challenges and threats to universities and to democracy. In this moment, Co-learning practitioners must struggle for political and pedagogical space.

Perhaps Co-learning will function best if it engages with these contradictions, rather than trying to escape them. In this moment, Co-learning practitioners can help develop consciousness and strategy among forces driving social change and a liberatory political vision, and cultivate engaged and humble student-professionals, with the skills and capacities for thoughtful community practice. Inside universities, Co-learning can help re-frame the discourse of who creates knowledge and what purpose it serves.

## Chapter 6: Toward Community-University Co-Learning

Through Co-learning, UEP is posing a new line of inquiry into its community practice—can collaborative long-term planning with core partners be a vehicle for the co-production of research, teaching and practice? This inquiry emerges in the context of more than 40 years of ‘community embeddedness’-- long-term and reciprocal relationships with environmental and community development practitioners. These relationships have been pipelines for engaged research and experiential learning, and for the recruitment of students and faculty from these communities.

This community ‘embeddedness’ has not come without challenges. As my research has documented, UEP has struggled with the ways that, despite their intentions, universities tend to separate scholarship from community service. The system of tenure that rewards individualized and peer reviewed research brought more tenured faculty to UEP, but came at the expense of some of its most engaged faculty, and the more collaborative scholarship and dynamic community initiatives through which UEP had made itself known.

These tensions are not unique to UEP or to Tufts, but reflect the dynamics of 20<sup>th</sup> century modern research universities. I have argued that massive federal investment into universities, from the GI Bill to the Great Society programs, led to contradictions in universities’ roles as institutions for research and for community development. The student movements of the

1960's and 1970's, particularly those aligned with the Black liberation movement, asserted a role for universities in urban community development, building deep grassroots community partnerships that laid the groundwork for traditions of engaged scholarship and community-based research. The conservative backlash of the 1980's obliterated many of these programs and stripped universities of much of their public funding, further discouraging them from investing in community action. Yet calls for a renewal of university civic missions and innovations in community-engaged scholarship have persisted, even as devolution, privatization, and neoliberal restructuring threaten the democratic basis of universities.

Co-learning emerges in both the challenges and opportunities of this historic moment, and drawing on the tradition of grassroots knowledge production articulated most clearly by the Black liberation movement. At Tufts, Co-learning emerges in a moment where UEP solidified itself as an academic department, and has been able to re-build and re-imagine its community practice, creating new vehicles for sustained engagement as well as pipelines for recruitment of community practitioners who have often been students of color.

In the spirit of Co-learning, I have been far from a “detached or neutral” researcher in this study. I conducted this research as student practitioner, and as an “advocate evaluator” over the past three years of my work at UEP as a graduate assistant for CoRe and Talloires Network. In this thesis project, I have sought to contribute to the development of Co-learning

at UEP, to help university leadership contextualize it within the department's own history and in broader traditions of university-community partnership. My hope is that this context can bolster the argument for investment in Co-learning, so that others-- across the boundaries of community and university-- can participate and experience transformational learning toward transformative social change.





## Appendix A. IRB Approval



OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR RESEARCH

Social, Behavioral, and Educational Research  
Institutional Review Board  
FWA00002063

March 9, 2015 | Notice of Action

IRB Study # 1501045 | Status: ACTIVE

**ATTENTION: BEFORE CONDUCTING ANY RESEARCH, PLEASE READ THE ENTIRETY OF THIS NOTICE AS IT CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT PROPER STUDY PROCEDURES.**

Title: Educating Practical Visionaries at Tufts University: Towards a Model for Community-University Co-Learning

PI: Rebecca Tumposky  
Faculty Advisor: Penn Loh

The PI is responsible for all information contained in both this notice of action and on the following [Investigator Responsibilities Sheet](#).

Only copies of approved stamped consent forms and other study materials may be utilized when conducting your study.

This research protocol now meets the requirements set forth by the Office for Human Research Protections in 45 CFR 46 under Expedited .

Reviewed 3/7/2015 – Expires 3/6/2016

- Approved for 12 participants for the duration of the study.

**Protocol Management:**

- All translated study documents must be submitted for review, approval, and stamping prior to use.
- For all changes to the protocol, submit: *Request for Protocol Modification* form
- All Adverse Events and Unanticipated Problems must be reported to the Office of the IRB promptly (no later than 7 calendar days after first awareness of the problem) using the appropriate forms.
- Six weeks prior to the expiration of the protocol on 3/6/2016, investigators must submit either a *Request for Continuing Review* or a *Request for Study Closure*
- All forms can be found at: <http://www.tufts.edu/central/research/IRB/Forms.htm>

IRB Administrative Representative Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B. Interview Consent Form

### CONSENT FORM

#### STUDY DETAILS:

**CONSENT TYPE:** STANDARD WRITTEN

**LOCATION:** Tufts campus and Boston area locations

**PARTICIPANTS:** Tufts faculty and community partners OVER 18

**COMPENSATION:** NONE

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### TUFTS UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND PLANNING

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Rebecca Tumposky

#### CONTACT DETAILS:

40 Newman Way

Arlington, MA 02476

Tel: (510) 780-6429

Email: [Rebecca.tumposky@tufts.edu](mailto:Rebecca.tumposky@tufts.edu)

**STUDY TITLE:** Educating Practical Visionaries at Tufts University: Towards Community-University Co-Learning

#### PURPOSE AND DURATION:

This study involves research on your involvement and assessment of UEP's community strategies. It will ask questions about your roles and involvement, and how you have seen UEP's approaches change over time. We expect that it will take approximately 1 hour of your time.

#### PROCEDURES:

This will be a semi-structured interview that will involve 5 guiding questions to help draw out information about your roles and involvement, and how you have seen UEP's approaches change over time.

#### RISKS AND DISCOMFORT:

There are no foreseeable risks or discomfort associated with this study.

**BENEFITS:** There are no direct benefits to you besides the educational experience of participating in the study. We hope that this study is that it will help draw out larger lessons that will improve UEP's community understanding of its own engagement

strategies and subsequently strengthen their impact over time on students, faculty, and the community.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** The results of this study may be published in a scholarly book or journal, presented at professional conferences or used for teaching purposes. Your name and organizational affiliation may be used in these publications or teaching materials. Any direct quotations included in the final report will be approved by you prior to their use.

**COMPENSATION:** There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

**REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

You may ask more questions about the study at anytime. Please e-mail the principal investigator at [Rebecca.tumposky@tufts.edu](mailto:Rebecca.tumposky@tufts.edu) or telephone (510) 780-6429 with any questions or concerns about the study. In addition, you may contact Lara Sloboda at the Office of the Institutional Review Board at (617) 627-3417.

**WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPATION:**

Your participation is voluntary. Should you decide at anytime during the study that you no longer wish to participate, you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation without penalty or loss of benefits.

**SIGNATURE A:** I confirm that I understand the purpose of the research and the study procedures. I understand that I may ask questions at any time and can withdraw my participation without prejudice. I have read this consent form. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study.

---

Participant Signature

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Participant

**SIGNATURE B:** I consent to have my name and organizational affiliation used in the final version and/or publication of this study. After reviewing the language of direct quotations, I consent to have my name and affiliation attached to them in the final version and/or publication of this study.

---

Participant Signature

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Participant

---

Researcher Signature

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Researcher

**SIGNATURE C:** I consent to have this interview recorded. I understand that the audio file of this recording will be stored anonymously in a secure location. The data will be kept for the federally required minimum duration of 3 years, and the only people who will have access to it during this period are the Researcher (Rebecca Tumposky) and the Project Advisor (Penn Loh). After this 3 year period the data will be deleted.

---

Participant Signature

Date

---

Printed Name of Participant

---

Researcher Signature

Date

---

Printed Name of Researcher

## Appendix C. Recruitment Material

Dear \_\_ (Faculty member) \_\_\_\_\_

I am a second year MA student at UEP, and I am writing to request your participation in my thesis research. My thesis is analyzing UEP's current approach to community partnerships and community engagement by placing it within UEP's own history of community strategies as well as within historical and current traditions of place-based university/community partnerships and democratic planning.

As part of this, I plan to do some primary interviews with UEP faculty to document the stages and evolution of UEP's community strategies that have paved the way for the current phase. As one of the core faculty members of UEP, I would love the opportunity to meet with you to hear your perspectives about the stages and evolution of UEP's community strategies and partnerships.

**If you are able to do this, do you have any availability the weeks of \_\_\_\_\_ for a 1-1.5 hour meeting?**

I have attached my proposal in case you want to get more of a sense of my research questions. Thank you in advance for considering this request!

Best,

Rebecca Tumposky

---

Dear \_\_ Community partner \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a second year MA student at UEP, and I am writing to request your participation in my thesis research. My thesis is analyzing UEP's current approach to community partnerships and community engagement by placing it within UEP's own history of community strategies as well as within historical and current traditions of place-based university/community partnerships and democratic planning.

As part of this, I plan to do some primary interviews with long-term community partners to document the stages and evolution of UEP's community strategies that have paved the way for the current phase. As a UEP community partner, I would love the opportunity to meet with you to hear your perspectives about your experience of the effectiveness of UEP's community strategies and partnerships.

**If you are able to do this, do you have any availability the weeks of \_\_\_\_\_ for a 1-1.5 hour meeting?**

I have attached my proposal in case you want to get more of a sense of my research questions. Thank you in advance for considering this request!

Best,

Rebecca Tumposky

## Appendix D. Example Interview Questions/Protocol

### UEP Faculty

1. Go over goals of study, consent form, etc. Ask if they have any questions.
  - a. Go over the thesis project
  - b. Go over consent form. Ask if you can record the interview, and let them know I will be securing it by keeping it on my personal hard drive under the date the interview was completed, and then will delete it after the 3 year minimum requirement is completed. Highlight what they can uniquely contribute to the study, which is: an understanding of how UEP's approach to CE has evolved over time and how it relates/compares to what peer departments were/are doing.
  - c. Framing/setting up interview:
    - i. You have now have seen multiple decades of UEP engaged in community. I would like to get your take on how you would define various “eras” of work. Could you identify 4-6 distinct phases or stages and/or key turning points (high points or low points) in the department's history. In short, what's the “story” of UEP’s civic engagement work from your perspective?
2. Why do you think community strategies and partnerships have been emphasized at UEP? Why has this been important to the academic goals and pedagogy at UEP?
3. In your time working with UEP, how have you seen the program engage in community strategies and partnerships?
4. What have been some of strengths of UEP’s community strategies, or places where you have seen it work well?
5. What have been some of the limitations or places where it has fallen short?
6. In what ways have you seen community strategies changed over your time at UEP? In what ways has recognition of the strengths and limitations of different practices influenced new approaches? Other impetuses?
7. How would you characterize community strategies at UEP today? What do you think would be needed maximize the impact of this work (on students, faculty, and communities)?

### **UEP Community Partners**

1. Go over goals of study, consent form, etc. Ask if they have any questions.
  - a. Go over the thesis project
  - b. Go over consent form. Ask them to sign. Ask if you can record the interview, and let them know I will be securing it by keeping it on my personal hard drive under the date it was completed and then will delete it after the 3 year minimum requirement is completed. Highlight what they can uniquely contribute to the study, which is: an understanding of how UEP's approach to CE has evolved over time and how it relates/compares to what peer departments were/are doing.
2. In your time working in partnership with UEP, what projects and collaborations have you been part of?
3. What have been some of strengths of these collaborations, or places where it has worked well for you and your organization?
4. What have been some of the limitations or places where it has fallen short?
5. In what ways have you seen community strategies changed over your time at UEP? What reflections, if any, do you have on these changes?



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