Collaborative University-Community Research Teams

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Since its creation in oyola University's enter for Urban esearch and earning U has used collaborative university community research teams to complete more than research projects rojects have ranged from how to sustain stable diverse neighborhoods to developing culturally sensitive approaches to domestic violence prevention in the South sian community U is an innovative non traditional research center that only engages in research where community organizations are involved in conceptualization and development of the research projects n most cases community partners are also involved at various levels in all phases of the research including methodology design data collection data analysis report writing and dissemination of research results ommunity partners include informal neighborhood networks community based organizations advocacy groups non profit social service providers citywide or regional advocacy coalitions and selected local government agencies

primary element in U 's mission is to bring the community's eyes ears and voice to the metaphorical or real "research table" n traditional academic research new ideas develop out of past discipline based research and are fine tuned through informal and formal interactions among university based researchers nformal discussions based organizations a

pointing to additional existing research or theoretical perspectives that might help guide the emerging research project deas for fine

information – either existing data or newly collected data – may be useful in addressing that issue

the heart of all of U 's work are its collaborative research teams fully developed team will include faculty members graduate research fellows undergraduate fellows or undergraduates from an Urban Studies Seminar run by U community partners or community fellows and U staff. The research process taps into the perspectives and creativity of all participants and provides an effective way of managing community and university resources. Teams are also an effective way of integrating university and community resources—from use of graduate and undergraduate student time to efficiently integrating expertise of faculty and community organization staff.

Ithough the dominant model of university based research centers has faculty at the core of the center true to U 's collaborative mission both faculty and community partners help frame the research. They are always "on call" during the research process raduate students are at the core of the teams. They manage day to day work coordinate, and mentor, undergraduate fellows, communicate with faculty, and community partners as needed, and work with other. U full time staff, iven the costs of buying out portions of faculty members' salaries and the limited time that faculty and already over taxed community leaders have engaging graduate students in coordinating the research process effectively extends the research capacity of faculty and community leaders.

ollaborative research teams also provide unparalleled practical learning environments for students. Us staff often talk about throwing graduate students into the "deep end" of research as a way of teaching them to "swim." The availability of

or more colleagues at the enter in any given day means that there is lots of guidance and advice always available to provide a helpful hand raduate students have thrived in this environment

members and regular team meetings typically weekly meetings for active projects graduate students and other team members work in an environment that encourages an exchange of knowledge and exposure to different perspectives – perspectives that are not always available in traditional academic research settings—uring the academic year—U—schedules regular—riday—orning Seminars where—U—researchers present on their research faculty outside the center talk about community related issues—community leaders discuss new programs—leaders of advocacy organizations describe current initiatives—and other collaborative researchers talk about community based participatory research approaches

n addition to opportunities for mentoring and idea generation provided at the riday orning Seminars. U holds monthly graduate student led meetings on substantive or technical aspects of current research projects. These may include topics like what constitutes research ethics how to convince the institutional eview oard that community input in resea.

which U is aware by virtue of its regular contact with community groups. The physical space of the center itself is also conducive to interaction among staff students and faculty on a daily basis — ccupying one half of one of the floors of the university's academic buildings. U is more than — offices and workstations—including open office environment design—provide ample opportunity for the more than — staff students faculty fellows and visiting community partners to interact formally and informally

Ithough staffing and fellowships fluctuate with the number of research projects in a typical year U has eight full time staff members four faculty fellows two community fellows funded graduate students paid undergraduate fellows and another undergraduate students working one day a week in conjunction with the Urban Studies Seminar unding comes either from U 's endowment or from stipends or salary built into various research grants

raduate research fellowships are either combined stipend and tuition scholarship fellowships or hourly paid fellowships These fellows typically work hours per week during the semester and full time in the summer has an ongoing pool of internal U university applicants from which to select new candidates raduate fellows are recruited from all departments and schools in the university but sociology and psychology graduate students have represented about percent of U 's fellows over the years U offers one year full time pre or post doctoral fellowships to selected graduate fellows who have worked at the center for one or more years These have

U has a million endowment

proven to be great preparation for graduate students entering either academic or non academic careers

Undergraduate fellows are drawn from two sources pplications for U

Undergraduate ellowships are invited from all undergraduate students twice a year

Typically representing or more different majors undergraduate fellows work ten hours a week on one of U 's teams n addition to the paid fellows another undergraduates enrolled in a six credit hour Urban Studies Seminar are required to complete ten hours of work per week on a U research team

aculty involved in research teams sometimes receive fellowships which normally provide course reductions for one or two semesters — n other cases—faculty work with research teams as part of their own ongoing research interests or as a principle investigator on one of —U—'s research grants —n some cases—faculty come to —U—with ideas for collaborative univ

committee of local residents students were talking about a diversity initiative on campus ne of the community residents responded to the conversation saying "You are only playing 'diversity' on your campus here in the community we are living diversity"

This led to a conversation that would not have taken place separately