
Issue Editors' Notes

OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES, a democratic, engaged, civic university movement has developed across the United States. A central feature of this movement has been university-community partnerships in which higher educational institutions work with organizations and schools in their local community. Much of this work has focused on the education and development of young people.

The extent to which colleges and universities have developed serious, sustained, democratic, mutually beneficial partnerships that genuinely benefit the community and its residents has varied widely. As tends to be the case in the early days of any movement, rhetoric at times outstrips reality. Nevertheless, significant change has occurred regarding both the quantity and quality of partnerships, and intriguing models have been developed. Still, significant challenges remain. The struggle to achieve transformative democratic practice in the face of seemingly intractable obstacles resides at the heart of this volume of *New Directions for Youth Development*.

Developing powerful and effective university-community partnerships for youth development is extremely difficult to do. It requires, among other things, overcoming traditional ivory tower thinking and doing; developing creative, comprehensive approaches; and engaging in long-term democratic, collaborative work. Fortunately, a number of partnerships fit this bill and serve as helpful examples to other higher educational institutions and their communities. We chose five such university-community partnerships from across the United States to feature in this volume. Each has been developed over a number of years and has focused on making a genuine difference in the condition of young people and their schools and communities. The case studies are from the

State University of New York, Buffalo; Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; University of Pennsylvania; University of Dayton; and Widener University. Academics, community and school partners, and university administrators, including a university president (Widener University), have authored or coauthored the articles.

All of the articles, including ours, focus on university-school partnerships. Given the significance of the university-school connection and the obvious relationship between education and youth development, it is logical that schooling and education would be consistent themes across case studies. Even so, we did not foresee it when we planned the volume. We contacted colleagues who were involved with comprehensive, multidimensional partnerships. Given what we knew of their work, we assumed that only the University of Pennsylvania and University of Dayton cases would extensively discuss schools. That all the article authors chose to highlight projects with public schools is a powerful indicator that university-school-community partnerships have become the primary means for developing the democratic, engaged, civic university dedicated to advancing the quality of life and learning for all Americans, particularly its children.

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