OSU Research Impacts Network

NABI Broader Impacts Summit

April 2015

Cascade Hop,
Craft Brewing and
Oregon State University

Julie Risien I Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning I Julie.Risien@oregonstate.edu
I want to do my research, not outreach!

My research is important, but there’s not enough time or money to do Broader Impacts

My research really matters and I’ll make sure everyone benefits!
Introduction
The OSU Center for Research for Lifelong STEM Learning with support from the OSU Research Office and in collaboration with OSU Outreach and Engagement, convened a “Broader Impacts Invitational Workshop” in December 2012. The workshop solicited opinions and perspectives from 65 participating faculty who were broadly representative of OSU’s diverse disciplines and units. The goals of the workshop were 1) to move OSU towards a more strategic and intellectually rigorous approach to broader impacts (BI) and 2) identify the specific tools and supports investigators and units need to effectively design, implement and evaluate quality BI efforts.

Campus-Wide Workshop
The December 2012 invitational workshop was organized to allow participants to grapple with the issues surrounding BIs at OSU. The morning hours were devoted to defining the current opportunities and challenges of designing and implementing BI efforts at OSU. The afternoon hours were spent trying to envision scenarios for moving forward and defining strategies for the future of OSU BIs.

Opportunities
There was striking unanimity of opinion around the current opportunities for BIs at OSU; these fell within three broad categories:
1. Supporting OSU’s Mission as a Land Grant University.
2. Positioning OSU for Success.
3. Supporting the OSU Strategic Plan and Research Agenda.

Challenges
Workshop participants identified three major areas of challenge.

Culture and Reward
Participants emphasized a cultural imbalance present at many research universities. It’s the tendency to value discipline specific scholarship and publishing over (rather than in balance with) generating positive impacts, engaging the public in research, and the types of collaborative approaches that make for successful BIs. This culture exists to some degree at all levels and most strongly manifests in promotion and tenure processes. Providing incentives for early career faculty successfully engaged in BIs is a recommended course of action for incremental change.

Capacity and Tradeoffs
Participants recognized dedication of time and resources to BIs implies a direct tradeoff with research and teaching. They invited a streamlined infrastructure to assist with BIs, but cautioned against introducing bureaucracy or stifling innovation.

Connections and Maximizing Existing Capacity
Faculty find it difficult to make and maintain connections with partners (units, programs and people connected with OSU or distinct from OSU). In general faculty do not have the tools to choose partners that match their BI needs. Participants emphasized difficulty responding to investigators on short notice often after a project is designed. The most successful BI efforts are likely to be those which are integrated into research and identify partners early enough in the proposal process to allow co-design of the project.

A Vision Statement
Another result of the workshop is this draft vision of BIs at OSU.

“At OSU Broader Impacts represents a commitment to insuring a constant connection between the intellectual enterprise of the university and an enduring obligation to providing public value; a commitment to using the vast resources of the university to help build a healthier planet, healthier people and a healthier economy for Oregon and the nation. This commitment to Broader Impacts is reflective of the values and principles set forth in the OSU Research Agenda and integrated into every facet of university life from research (both fundamental and applied), to teaching, to community programs, and outreach and engagement. Accordingly, the University has functional and efficient processes that provide all faculty members with tools, incentives, and rewards to maximize the realized benefits to society of their work. OSU actively works to make its activities transparent and benefits accessible to the communities it serves. OSU has created an integrated “triple bottom line” structure to support the goals of healthy people, planet, and economy that actualize OSU’s strategic goal of solving society’s most intractable problems. This triple bottom line involves the integration of “intellectual merit”, “broader impacts” and financial sustainability.”

Institutional Action
Institutionalization of BIs is already taking shape at OSU and is being driven by the OSU Research Office. Future activities are likely to include:
1. Establish a two-tiered steering committee that includes both those with administrative authority and faculty and staff active with BI planning and implementation who are proven agents of change.
2. Conduct an analysis of OSU’s current strengths and weaknesses with regards to BI and refining our understanding of the opportunities and challenges identified at the workshop.
3. Create a blueprint of campus infrastructure, capacities, and partners for designing and implementing BIs.
4. Develop a short and long-term strategy for sparking institutional change, especially with regard to our refined understanding of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges from step 2.
Network Goal

Improve processes, communication, and accessibility related to existing tools for developing high quality impacts to fulfill Strategic Plan 3.0 - specifically Goal 3 to strengthen impact and reach throughout Oregon and beyond with respect to our three signature areas of distinction - and to better compete for external resources and enhance impacts of research addressing five global challenges.
Network Starting Objectives

Understand the current landscape of research capacity and interests at OSU and map a course to improve access, communication, and accessibility of tools and capacities.

Establish a set of best practices and build capacity of investigators so they may excel in partnering, planning, designing, implementing, evaluating and budgeting impact activities. Define and strengthen the relationship between research, engagement and impacts and begin to shift practices to better support the OSU mission and research agenda.

Adopt an institutional vision and brand for research impacts at OSU to guide action and articulate to funding agencies the aggregate societal impacts OSU strives to achieve through research and engagement.
Participant Criteria

Network Participants Must...

• Have **interest** in and **capacity** to engage in institutional-scale solutions to research impact challenges.

• Have a **voice** and regular **audience** with the administrative **leadership** (Dean or Vice Provost) of their parent unit.

• Be **known connectors** in their own unit *and* across units.

• Able to participate in 6-12 network gatherings a year and engage in smaller scale action groups related to their interests and expertise.
Also... one of these

• Have **expertise** and **experience** to design, propose, implement, or evaluate research impact activities.
• Have direct **access** to and/or **knowledge** of research impact tools or programs external to OSU.
• Have demonstrable **success in collaborating** with PIs on research impacts.
Faculty

Scholarship

Programs

Assessment

Global Challenges

Coordinated Communication

National Issues

Innovation

Aggregate Impacts

Engagement

Land Grant Mission

OSU Strategic Plan

Access

Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning
The Network Goal and Structure

Everyone is no more than one degree of separation from accessing the Network.
Extension COI or Valuable Partner
Competitive Tensions and Connections
Working Timeline

Kick-off Report to Leadership

Operations Exec Committee

Work Plan $ Request

Functioning Network

18 Mo Review

MAY 2015 ............................................ JAN 2017
Thank you

Acknowledgements: Deb Maddy, Kyle Cole, Dave Hansen, Mary Phillips, Peg Herring, John Falk, Scott Reed and Ron Adams

Julie Risien, Associate Director
Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning

http://stem.oregonstate.edu
http://stem.oregonstate.edu/research-projects

Julie.Risien@oregonstate.edu