



Sustaining Community-Engaged Projects: Making Visible the Invisible Labor of Composition Faculty

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Abstract

Increasingly, service-learning, community-engaged projects, or community-engaged learning are encouraged in higher education across disciplines (Leon et al. 40). While community-engaged learning is hailed as an effective pedagogical practice, we have questions about the way in which community-engaged projects might be facilitated in composition classrooms, which have increasingly been fraught with labor concerns, particularly those concerns that routinely result in the “exploitation of part-time workers and graduate employees” (Bousquet 159). This article, then, exposes the often unspoken and invisible labor involved in designing and facilitating community-engaged projects in the composition classroom. Here, we note the challenges inherent in sustaining community-engaged projects in the composition classroom and call for more sustainable systems to meet those constraints.

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n their most ideal form, community-involved projects in composition classrooms have been framed as a means for students to understand and create rhetorical, audience-driven writing and designing, rather than ‘artificial’ composing for which the professor is consistently the sole audience (Deans 2). Linda Adler-Kassner’s scholarship offers examples of possibilities for composition-community partnerships to engage students in discussion of the ethical implications of their composing practices as social practices. Beyond composition, higher education institutions as a whole see the value of community-engaged projects. The Association of American Colleges and Universities considers service-learning as a high impact practice (HIP), and the outcomes of such practices favorable (“High-Impact Educational Practices”). For example, the AACU points out that “educational research suggests increased rates of student retention and student engagement” when students are involved in HIP courses (“High-Impact Educational Practices”). Despite these documented benefits, however, *sustaining* community-engaged learning projects in composition classrooms remains a challenge.

In fact, our own experiences with service-learning or community-engaged learning have led us to question the ways in which neoliberal influences frame “high impact” practices as a kind of product with a “market value” (Raddon and Harrison 137). Our concern with neoliberal ideologies will be expanded later in this article, but here we acknowledge neoliberalism in higher education by referring to Lisa Duggan’s scholarship, which notes the rise of neoliberalism in many institutions since the 1970s. According to Duggan, neoliberalism is marked by creating new systems of resource distribution. Duggan describes a system of “consent for the upward distribution of wealth and power” constructed for an often unwitting public who accepts an ideology of free and unregulated markets and support for “global corporate interests” rather than investing in local supports such as supporting a local workforce (181). Neoliberalism has thus resulted in new forms of invisible labor for faculty. More specifically, within the neoliberal framework, our observation is that HIPs are often represented in HIP literature as being carried out by an anonymous faculty member, thus leaving the realities of the faculty member facilitating such practices out of the transactional equation. In most promotional literature touting HIPs, the student engages in the “high impact” practice, and the university maintains high retention rates. The faculty is, curiously and notably, absent. There is often little mention of the work needed to facilitate an effective community-engaged project, including researching, networking, organizing, leading, mediating, and teaching. This lack of recognition, and therefore lack of support, for the work expended by these faculty members ultimately depletes faculty members’ emotional, cognitive, and in some cases, financial resources, making both community-engaged projects and the faculty position itself unsustainable.

Because of changing structures in higher education caused by neoliberalism, composition programs in particular face labor repercussions (e.g., a move from TT to NTT and contingent faculty). As such, we need to expose the hidden labor of faculty and articulate the support necessary for intensive teaching practices, given that the labor on which HIPs rely is often under-researched. Jane Halonen and Dana Dunn state, "...what frustrates many faculty members is that, when these efforts [in carrying out HIPs] are successful, praise tends to go to the high-impact practice itself. The faculty member, whose teaching style may have been the deciding factor, goes unrecognized and unrewarded" ("Does 'High-Impact' Teaching Cause High-Impact Fatigue?"). Considering the hidden work of a successful project as facilitated by a faculty member is important, we argue not for individual recognition, but for acknowledging best practices that allow faculty to implement effective teaching strategies. This issue of demands on faculty is particularly salient at the crossroads between labor and identity in composition and in the university in general—a result, as Steven Shulman argues, of the rise of contingent labor in higher education (2).

We contend that we must make visible and challenge the unsustainable expectations of instructors to deliver HIP practices, such as service learning, or, more recently, community-engaged projects,¹ without appropriate supports. By keeping invisible the theoretical frameworks that perpetuate, or even attempt to justify, invisible labor, we fail to protect ourselves and our discipline from harmful narratives that have real and detrimental consequences. For example, narratives about the need for graduate students, NTT faculty, and TT faculty to 'prove themselves' in such ways that lead to overwhelming amounts of work, contribute to a system that does not *work* for them and has led to the modification of the structure of higher education altogether. That said, the notion of large-scale changes at the level of the university is daunting, and most likely requires more of the invisible (and unrewarded) labor we write about here. To focus on the more local level of composition studies, however, provides a manageable (or sustainable) means through which faculty can use their own narratives in empowering ways.

Our focus on the local level, then, allows us to clarify the links between neoliberal critiques and leads to a call for recognition of invisible

¹ Given that language evolves to align with social constructs, some sources throughout this piece refer to "service learning" (Hesford 185; Pompa 189) "community-engaged projects" ("CCCC Statement..."), "community service learning" (Hesford 189), "community engagement" (Dolgan, Corey, et al. 527), or "community-engaged learning" (such as the name of the office that exists at Barbara's institution). The move from 'service' to 'engagement' (and its derivatives) stems from awareness of the hierarchal connotations of providing services to a person or organization that is somehow lacking (Pompa 176).

labor in composition studies. The narratives we share in this article show how we, as faculty members who see value in service-learning or community-engaged projects in our composition classes, have experienced the consequences of invisible labor and, therefore, have found community-engaged learning unsustainable. Our narratives are informed by the several subject positions we have held—graduate student, high school teacher, adjunct faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, and tenure-track faculty—in our facilitation of community-engaged projects in rhetoric and composition. These narratives, then, serve the purpose of using ‘local’ experiences to speak to potential changes at the ‘local-level’ of the university.

Narratives: Complicating Community

Faculty Status in Community-Engaged Learning: The Authors’ Stake

Within the overarching purpose of contextualizing assertions and operating on a more manageable, local level, Jessica’s and Barbara’s narratives each show the pervasiveness of invisible labor across positions within the university, and, therefore, the fractures in the higher education system that make HIPs and the successful fulfillment of faculty duties unsustainable.

Having filled roles as graduate student faculty, short-term faculty, writing program administrator, and non-tenure-track, regular-rank faculty member, Jessica has remained aware of, and at times been angered by, the varying labor conditions within higher education. While she has managed to both lead students in community-engaged projects and continue, to some degree, her own commitment to working with non-profit organizations, these endeavors have been filled with personal and practical complexities and have not been without consequences. While she has wanted to engage students in service-learning projects, these projects require a great deal of mediation and oversight on her part—locating a community partner, organizing students, providing feedback to students on their work, ensuring ethical practices throughout the process of the project, and ensuring that the needs of the community partner are met in such a way that her ethos, and the ethos of the university at which she is employed, remain intact. In the past, this labor also intersected with pressures to publish and, often, a high teaching load. Finally, given her status as a graduate student or NTT faculty member, she often faced the lack of resources provided to people in these positions (reduced salary, lack of opportunities to receive monetary assistance for projects, or TAs). Because of the limited salary—and despite an already-high teaching load—she was often forced to take on additional work to supplement her income. These circumstances only speak to professional hardships and neglect the personal hardships that existed outside of, or sometimes related to, such working conditions. After all this, her community-engaged projects could be included in annual review documents, but none of the work led to promotions or merit pay. These experiences, then, led her to examine the

conceptualization of community-engaged projects within the composition discipline, and how those notions make problematic her understanding of her own identity as an individual, professional, and activist.

Moreover, Barbara's shifting positions, from a high school teacher, to an adjunct at two institutions, to a tenure-track faculty member, show complications in the ways she felt she could 'engage' with community at various institutions in various identity positions. For example, while a high school teacher, Barbara participated in community-engaged projects within a high school that offered robust support for community-learning in terms of a fair wage (not just for Barbara, but for her colleagues), training, and time to facilitate projects. In this position, Barbara was intimately engaged with a community of teachers and a broader public community, and she met with students, students' siblings, and their parents (sometimes over the course of years) in order to understand long-term community concerns. Upon entering into higher education positions, this engagement was somewhat fractured, largely through hierarchies that resulted in different labor conditions across faculty. Barbara found some respite, in terms of being able to focus on one community, after obtaining a tenure-track position; however, the reality of her tenure expectations, such as publishing, did not always lend itself to making community projects a priority. Barbara found she had to actively advocate for time to nurture community programs, as these kinds of practices were not explicitly valued as part of the tenure process. In a sense, then, Barbara's engagement with community projects became 'invisible' in that if she wanted to nurture these community collaborations, she would do so in addition to, and not necessarily as part of, tenure expectations.

How Did We End up Here? The Status of Community-Engaged Learning in Composition Studies

Despite the challenges experienced by both Jessica and Barbara, they continue to see much potential in the transformative power of community-engaged projects, which has also been well-documented in composition scholarship. Once primarily referred to as service-learning, community-engaged projects have a long history in the composition classroom. In 1997, the turn towards service-learning in composition was noted in the volume *Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Composition*, as part of the American Association for Higher Education's Series on Service-Learning in the Disciplines. The chapters reveal a variety of responses to service learning: creating "radical transformations" (1), increasing student "motivation" (2), and making connections in the academy and in communities beyond the academy (3-4). In 2000, Thomas Deans echoed similar themes as he pointed to the reasons why composition faculty would want to engage in such pedagogies:

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Most service-learning practitioners who experiment with community-based pedagogies do so because they see them as a way to improve their teaching, to motivate students, to advance disciplinary learning, to facilitate student agency, or to enact values they hold dear, such as expanding public consciousness of social injustice or connecting cognitive learning to grounded social action. (7)

This follows a turn in composition more broadly to understand the socially situated nature of writing, and writing that exists in communities and publics, later pursued by scholars such as Linda Flower and Paula Mathieu.

Both Jessica and Barbara were aware of, and valued, best practices within community-engaged teaching. For example, they endeavored to create meaningful community-engaged projects such as those outlined in the current “Position Statement” of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, which describes community-engaged projects as those that “build and reflect disciplinary knowledge, produce new,[sic] hybrid forms of theoretical and applied knowledge, and promote connections among universities and different communities;” these projects, “when done well...blen[d] traditional divisions of academic labor: namely, teaching, research, and service” (“CCCC Statement...”). Jessica’s projects, for instance, have involved students conducting marketing research and co-creating marketing materials for non-profit organizations, co-developing high school curricula that incorporates non-profit organizations, and composing creative non-fiction narratives of clients using resources such as the Campus Kitchens Project. Barbara’s projects have included work with the university environmental sustainability office. Her students designed, researched, collected data, and analyzed surveys to more clearly understand students’ perceptions of campus transportation, campus energy use, and knowledge of green spaces on campus. In different semesters, students co-designed with their partner alternate transportation maps for campus, posters displaying campus energy saving options, and maps to identify green spaces on campus. Both Jessica and Barbara were mindful of incorporating best practices within projects outlined in each course through design and facilitation. For example, descriptions of community-based projects outside of the composition scholarship involve analysis, application, reflection (“High-Impact Educational Practices”), social change (Pompa 189), and reciprocity (Dolgon et al. 532; Eatman et al. 365-366; Pompa 178). In addition to reciprocity, Eatman et al. identify agency, innovation, rigor, and artifacts as elements of such work (355-366). However, these many considerations of meaningful community engagement as a pedagogical practice have raised larger questions for Jessica and Barbara about the role of higher education as a whole, particularly sustainable support for instructors doing the often invisible work in the university.

From Faculty to Composition Studies to the University: Tracing the Problematic Narratives Behind Service-Learning and Invisible, Unsustainable Labor

Traditional understandings of the purpose of higher education involved transforming students into informed citizens with the desire and ability to “giv[e] back to the community” (“High-Impact Educational Practices”). As noted earlier in this paper, however, several researchers outline a turn towards neoliberalism that has ultimately become part of the university and, by extension, changed the ways instructors position themselves to work with communities. Various scholars place the neoliberal phenomena as either an ideology, policy, or government system, or a combination of all three (Raddon and Harrison 137). Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades extend the definition of neoliberalism by investigating ways by which neoliberalism is pervasive in the university, in that the university “support[s] corporate competitiveness through their major role in the global, knowledge-based economy;” here, university goals have shifted from humanitarian ideals to management in order to pursue capital or market gain (73). Similarly, Marc Bousquet outlines the rise of the corporate university, and its attendant growth in profits, at the expense of the often unaccounted labor that supports such a system (5).

A turn towards neoliberalism has left some wondering about the commitment to, and the dynamics of, these historical humanitarian notions of college outcomes (Fishwick 336; Hesford 189). But it is scholars Mary Beth Raddon and Barbara Harrison who make an explicit connection between the neoliberal university and service learning, suggesting that service-learning models often embrace tenants of the neoliberal ideology of the university (137). More specifically, Raddon and Harrison investigate service learning as policy, describing it as the “kinder” face of the corporate university that downplays the actual capitalist underpinnings; those underpinnings are masked by what the authors term as “moral legitimacy” offering the *appearance* of a humanitarian university (141). Raddon and Harrison see community engagement as a possible competition tool for universities to vie for students by branding (and measuring) “student engagement,” and by attracting donors through what they refer to as “good washing” (142). “Good washing,” according to the authors, is a way for universities to forefront community-engagement projects as the “humanitarian” work a university does while obscuring the capitalist work of the university. Interestingly, according to Raddon and Harrison, instructors themselves become complicit in “good washing” when they mistakenly view their efforts as “counter” to the corporate university (143). The authors critique the assumption that social-justice service learning counters the neoliberal university by challenging instructors to “acknowledge their lack of control in service-learning;” for example, service-learning partners were often teaching subtle (or not so subtle) job placement skills, rather than providing an inquiry into

philosophical considerations of social-justice concerns (143-144). Raddon and Harrison suggest that more complicated discussions of how we might be framing labor could be had with students. In other words, teaching students to be aware of *how* labor is framed is an important part of consciousness raising for students.

While the political upheaval over the last three years, and an increase in student activism (Jason), may motivate a reassessment of what we aim to achieve in the institution of higher education, we hope the outcomes of our pedagogies surpass our most basic and most profound intentions. HIPs, such as community-engaged projects, offer promise for returning to the humanitarian goals of higher education but must undergo productive interrogation as begun by Raddon and Harrison. Other researchers, such as Hesford, ask, “Is service-learning functioning as a mere alibi for the corporate university?” (185), and further question how such work “may challenge, alter, or be complicit with inequitable labor relations within and outside the university” (189). Though universities are corporate (perhaps to varying degrees), as long as faculty are unsupported, or supported unequally, in spearheading community-engaged projects, these projects may be carried out within the same unjust system the project is designed to address.

As a matter of fact, as alluded to by Jessica’s and Barbara’s earlier narratives, professors² leading these projects may occupy subject positions similar to those of the clients and community partners involved in the project. Professors may find they need the very ‘services’ that service-learning or community-engaged projects are trying to offer. This dynamic allows the university free publicity, so to speak, portraying the university as a source of humanitarian efforts and a site of responsible and ethical decision making, while the very structures of the university undermine this image.

For example, Jessica remembers teaching a community-engaged project addressing food scarcity during a time when she had just received Medicaid and found herself struggling to buy groceries on a graduate teaching fellowship income. Barbara, meanwhile, found difficulty expanding community partnerships when she taught composition as a graduate student teaching fellow and as an adjunct, having to divide her time between two communities over an hour apart; her teaching assignments did not allow her to fully investigate possible partnerships in either community. Richer, authentic teaching experiences could not be linked as in her previous positions. Ironically, even the partnership she was able to pursue—helping students to showcase more sustainable

² In this article, “professor” encompasses all positions in which someone is teaching a class at an institution of higher education, remotely or face-to-face.

transportation practices through the environmental sustainability office at one higher education institution—was undermined by her own unsustainable transit practices as necessitated by two commutes. Certainly, a point of contention arises when universities, in theory, espouse education as an endeavor into social responsibility while simultaneously failing to create social infrastructures and policies that would practically and ethically support its faculty. In other words, we must begin to question practices of actual and perceived hierarchies. We must challenge the assumption that community-engaged projects somehow exempt actors from the neoliberal leanings of the university, regardless of position. Faculty at any level, given unemployment rates and varying salaries, may occupy privilege in some ways but not in others, just as the community partners with whom we work have agency in some ways but not in others. Teachers, students, and community partners are, indeed, benefactors of the work carried out in community-engaged projects; therefore, overly simplified perceptions of privilege and agency, and assumptions about who helps and who receives help, are problematic. After all, in our collaboration, “community partners and residents *are* teaching our students” (Dolgon et al. 532).

Similarly, we must, when warranted, challenge the tendency to label community- engaged projects as opportunities for students to engage in “real” writing (Hesford 190) in the ‘real world.’ After all, teachers and students did not live in a ‘fake world’ prior to entering higher education, nor did they leave a ‘real world’ to enter the ‘fake world’ of a university. In other words, teachers and students live, work, study, build relationships, and communicate in a variety of spaces and in a variety of forms, none of which are less authentic than others. The work they do in the university does not negate their personal (perhaps traumatic, perhaps empowering) experiences that occurred outside of the university. Therefore, for all those involved, interactions should embody the empathetic and rhetorical purpose of “being with” rather than “doing for” (Pompa 178). Moreover, a separation of “real,” or “public writing” from “unreal” or “academic writing” (Hesford 190) is problematic, given that we teach students how to employ critical skills even in ‘non-academic’ writing; researching, analyzing, problematizing, and creating rhetorically effective work based on audience and purpose are skills that can be employed when composing tweets, essays, or Instagram photos, for example.

Finally, we must actively interrogate intersectional concerns of subject positions when considering who is often engaged in the work of service-learning or community-engaged learning. Kimberlé William Crenshaw explains “intersectionality” in terms of overlapping marginalized identities that must be understood as a “sum” to more effectively alter existing power structures (140). Deans hints at the intersectional labor concerns inherent in some service-learning programs by discussing the historic ways in which gender expectations play out in projects. Specifically, he argues that “Use of the word service evokes not

only the specter of unequal server-served relations ...but also a gendered history in which women, both within and outside the academy, have been enculturated to submerge their selves in service to others (see JoAnn Campbell, "Vexation")" (23).

Back to the Professor: Labor in Community-Engaged Projects

Oversimplifying differences among people and their work makes invisible much of the labor that goes into community-engaged projects. Again, material and emotional labor often coincides with researching, networking, organizing, leading, mediating, and teaching while facilitating community-engaged projects. Professors choosing to take on these projects not only often face the emotional task of helping students confront injustices but also face pressure to meet expectations of community partners, which reflects on the professor, the students, and the institution. Likewise, professors may experience stress over how to yield results that they can argue fit within their tenure, promotion, or other evaluation criteria.

Therefore, while we work within the position statement on community-engaged projects in rhetoric and composition, as articulated by CCCC, we urge more focus on the support a faculty member needs to facilitate such projects. For example, the current statement offers "Principles for Evaluating Quality, Rigor and Success," which mentions "sustainability" as a consideration but follows with a focus on the *project* rather than on the *people* facilitating the project:

- To what extent is the project built to be sustainable?
- Does it have sufficient infrastructure and scaffolding?
- What resources provided by the university and/or community stakeholders are available in the short and long term?
- What resources will be needed, when, and by what mechanism(s) will they be sought?

We understand that some questions in the quote above might assume the professor is included in these questions, but we argue that each of these questions should more explicitly account for the faculty member, and the labor that will be exerted by that *person*. As such, we propose the statement ask:

- *Is the format of faculty labor facilitating the project equitable and sustainable?*
- *Do faculty have sufficient infrastructural support, resources, and training to facilitate such a project in a sustainable manner? If the answer is 'no,' by what mechanisms can faculty find additional resources?*

In other words, we make an active call for inclusion of those *doing* the composition labor to be more clearly highlighted in service-learning and community-engagement best practices. Raddon and Harrison further suggest that faculty might challenge the idea of service-learning as framed in terms of a kind of exchange of services by attending to the *role* faculty can play in promoting more just service-learning programs within higher education systems that are increasingly driven by market forces:

Most importantly, what does the conjuncture of neo-liberalism and the growth of service-learning mean for faculty seeking to design critical service-learning programs and pedagogies, on the one hand, and for faculty seeking to challenge the shaping of ‘academic capitalism,’ on the other? (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) (135).

By extension, the culture of higher education also makes problematic how scholars are recognized for this work (Eatman et al. 360). Hesford goes so far as to assert that universities “sell out faculty who engage in service learning,” as many tenure and promotion criteria do not account for community-engaged projects, perhaps because institutions have yet to figure out how to do so (189). Eatman et al. also point out that “traditional secondary artifacts” used for tenure, promotion, and evaluation purposes (such as books, articles, and syllabi) fail to acknowledge equally valuable “emerging primary artifacts” that may come from community-engaged projects (such as technical/policy reports, web resources, site plans, and curriculum plans) (362). Some may argue that while institutions might overlook community-engaged work, they also, in most cases, do not require such work. This argument, however, perpetuates the practice of “composition faculty [being] defined by what they are *not* expected to do...by the ways in which they are not expected to contribute” (Penrose 122).³ This practice, then, perpetuates the creation of working conditions in which faculty are unable to pursue the work they desire, required or not.

Indeed, labor expectations create unfair divisions among positions within the academy, confining some faculty to ‘lofty’ positions as researchers and others to more “caring” roles as primarily teachers (Cardozo 409). Often, these divides come in the form of TT or NTT designations, which also usually create divides in teaching loads, monetary compensation, and access to resources (such as research funds). Cardozo writes:

³ For NTTs, evaluation criteria may not only assess their professional performance based on what they are not expected to do, but their designation actually labels them according to what they are not.

...many tenure system faculty [,] as well as those in research roles also engage in aspects of caring labor, just as some NTT faculty may not actually care about students. Moreover, college teaching is also ‘productive’ work in increasing the value of human resources, just as research can be socially reproductive (witness the care literature itself). Nonetheless, the creation of a new teaching *segment* reveals a familiar hierarchical division of labor (even if the kinds of work faculty members do across sectors is [*sic*] mixed in practice). The framework of care remains instructive when we consider a feminized work sector charged exclusively with developing human capabilities and placed outside the spheres of knowledge generation and governance, with little control over the relations of re/production. (409)

As Cardozo suggests, rigorous publication expectations for TT faculty may not permit taking on the additional work involved in leading community-engaged projects. NTT faculty with fewer publication expectations may have teaching loads that limit their ability to take on community-based work. TT faculty, depending on the position, may also have heavy teaching loads, while NTT faculty may supplement their salaries with overloads or positions spread across multiple institutions—all of which limit the ability of professors to engage in meaningful work not accounted for in reviews. In essence, institutions limit the degree to which, and the ways in which, faculty contribute to the profession and their university. Divisions within systems where faculty work, in which institutions both misconstrue the work of faculty and privilege certain work (such as publishing) over other work (such as community-engaged projects), also send an implicit message to students that the work of contributing to a community is less valuable than the work they do in the lab or in creating competitive résumés.

In relation to implicit messages communicated to students, Hesford points out that opportunities for community-based projects may vary across departments, as schools increasingly vie for student engagement opportunities, potentially creating “a cockfight over resources, credit hours, and enrollments” (190). However, as of yet, little thought has been put into making these classes a consistent part of scheduling. Additionally, too little thought has been given to equitable labor practices of these more intensive courses. Who is scheduled to teach these courses? Are these instructors given adequate time to prepare and facilitate these courses? Are these instructors given equitable compensation for these more intense courses? Given the influx of students pursuing STEM fields, humanities departments may feel that they are competing to attract students, even if their departments are adequately resourced. While some students might flock to community-engagement courses, others may be turned off by the additional work or simply feel restrained by their major requirements. This, then, may further exacerbate

enrollment issues in community-based writing courses and, therefore, add to the emotional stress of contingent faculty.

What About the Professor as a Person? Labor in Community-Engaged Projects and Identity

As noted in the previous section, the invisible material and emotional labor created or perpetuated by barriers to community-engaged projects have implications regarding personal and professional identity.

For Jessica, her previous NTT position limited her ability to take on the community- engaged work she had committed to as an individual and as a professional. This inability to pursue the work she loved depleted her passion for her role as a professor. Her limited ability to engage in activist work outside of her professional role, moreover, also affected her on an emotional level. She felt unfulfilled, shut out of being an effective teacher, a scholar, and an activist. In addition, without *doing* what she wished to *teach*, she felt her ethos diminish. Whereas she once spoke enthusiastically about her work in rhetorical spaces outside of the classroom, and used those experiences to teach students how to engage in similar rhetorical spaces, she eventually felt compelled to shy away from such opportunities.

Barbara felt a similar disconnect when attempting to balance activist work with her scholarship expectations at the academy. She had come from high school experiences that supported long-term community engagements through equitable faculty pay, faculty health care, and reasonable security of tenure for most colleagues. Additionally, a level of reciprocity often existed among the faculty and with the community. In higher education, however, Barbara was surprised to navigate communities that often did not acknowledge the inequalities among faculty, and ‘siloes’ knowledge making. This fragmentation had consequences in terms of resource distribution. What was most distressing to Barbara was learning of the number of her faculty colleagues (often graduate students and adjuncts) whose pay rendered them food insecure, who did not have the means for reliable transportation, and who might be navigating medical or emotional issues without supports that Barbara had taken for granted at the high school level. As Barbara navigates a tenure-track position, the message is very clear: publication trumps all other activity. Because of the tenure structure, and the rewards inherent for particular activity in such a structure, Barbara’s work with environmental activists is sometimes relegated, not by choice, to “writing *about* the community” vs. “writing *with* the community,” simply due to time constraints (Deans 17). Despite her best intentions to stay involved and offer reciprocity, there has been a loss of reciprocity and solidarity with community groups.

In theory, then, as argued earlier in this article, institutions want teacher-scholars, but workloads and review criteria often fail to offer ways in which this work can be taken on practically and sustainably. Heavy

teaching loads, inadequate salaries, lack of merit pay that might allow professors to forego overloads, lack of promotions that might allow them to engage more rigorously with fewer classes, lack of teaching and research funds to financially support projects, and a lack of mentoring to ease some of the emotional labor all create barriers to community-based work. These issues may take a toll on one's quality of life. Furthermore, as Cardozo points out in the slogan of the New Faculty Majority: "faculty working conditions are student learning conditions," adding that "those working conditions are also *faculty* learning conditions" (420). In other words, any condition that stunts a faculty member's personal and professional growth also stunts the growth of the university and its students. When contingent faculty do manage to go beyond their job descriptions, it speaks to "their extraordinary personal commitment, not the professional structure of their position" (Penrose 118); of course, the same can be said for non-contingent faculty.

Future (and Sustainable) Approaches to Community-Engaged Projects

Our intention is to make the invisible work of professors facilitating community-engaged projects visible. Our aim is not to represent professors as people without agency; indeed, professors advocate for themselves, their students, and their communities in a variety of ways and spaces, as exemplified in this article. As such, we argue that faculty are best positioned to advocate for doing this important work of community building in a sustainable manner. We do this by making clear the support that we need. We turn to scholars such as Cardozo, who asserts:

We should not 'shield' students or the public from the costs of consequences of devaluing care work [such as teaching and community-engaged learning] in higher education, but expose them. At least two political responses follow from this: we can urge people to care less, or we can organize so that care work is valued more. More likely, both approaches are required: people must necessarily limit the amount of work they will do for free while at the same time they should be able to honor a deeply felt and socially beneficial ethic of caring. We must reclaim the value of caring while recognizing that working 'for love' renders us vulnerable to exploitation. (415)

Advocating for the time necessary to do the care work that Cardozo writes about remains a challenge for many professors who have committed to their professional roles and to social causes for deeply personal reasons, using their intellect to make strides toward social change. Like any relationship, the connections forged among people, ideas, and resources in community- engaged projects are messy. Cardozo's statement also puts

the onus on professors, rather than on the culture of higher education to recognize and value this work

Dolgon et al., on the other hand, attempt to address issues inherent in higher education systems more broadly, suggesting “five sets of theories, practices, and principles” that should guide community-based projects across disciplines and, potentially, be adopted systemically in higher education (see Table 1).

Table 1: Five Theories, Practices, and Principles for Community-Based Projects

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Revisit feminist pragmatism and the infusion of theory, practice, and politics from grassroots practice through institutional transformation and large-scale movement building” (530). 2. “Restore anticolonialism and antiracism (not diversity and inclusion) as foundational principles” (530). 3. “Recast class and the fundamental role of productive relations and economic power in all of our work on campus and in communities” (531). 4. “Embrace arts and humanities as fundamental to the practice of freedom” (531). 5. “Recognize a legacy of suffering and struggle, without falling victim to fatalism or cynicism” (531). |
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These suggestions seem to reach far into the future, however, perhaps leaving teachers and administrators alike wondering how to go about implementing such change.

Therefore, we offer suggestions for a more immediate approach to augment the recommendations of Dolgon et al. Specifically, we provide the following practical suggestions, inspired by Donna Stickland’s call for critical managerial approaches to labor in composition, not to promote or manage a neoliberal university, but to disrupt an unsustainable status quo, and ‘manage’ the material realities of such projects in practical ways to make visible otherwise invisible labor. Our suggestions also circle back to our earlier discussion of the “CCCC Statement on Community-Engaged Projects in Rhetoric and Composition,” which acknowledges the labor of “...teaching, research, and service” (par. 4). We use this as a starting point to make sustainable approaches to academic labor in community-engaged projects in composition more apparent (see Table 2).

Table 2: Suggestion for Sustainable Best Practices for Community-Engaged Projects in Composition

<p><u>1. Support Before a Project: Professional Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Professors should be provided funding to attend workshops and conferences that outline emerging best practices in community-engaged projects;● New professors and graduate students should be assigned a mentor to help with the planning and implementation of service-learning or community-engaged projects;● Professors and graduate students should be provided adequate (and compensated) time to meet with community members and to develop classroom resources (which often change as engagement with community members evolves);● The specific roles expected of a community-engaged project should be defined and assessed; teaching assignments should be strategized in terms of other teaching, service, and publication obligations of a professor;● Grant opportunities to develop innovative community partnerships and composition projects should be offered, including time and support to develop and maintain grants. <p><u>2. During a Project: Facilitation Support</u></p> <p>Professors take on various roles when facilitating projects. These roles should be acknowledged through compensation, course loads, and course releases (when applicable) in order to allow professors the time to serve as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mediator between students and community;● Writing faculty member. <p><u>3. After a Project: Research and Reporting Support</u></p> <p>Because community-engaged projects are cited as having high-impacts on students, professors should be able to engage in and dialogue with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Active research (qualitative studies, empirical studies);● Reporting opportunities for formal and informal evaluations. <p><u>4. Throughout a Project: Acknowledgement of Community-Engaged Service as Part of TT & NT Promotion</u></p> <p>Given the variety of roles professors take on, and the amount of time required, throughout community-based projects, professors should be given credit in review and promotion materials for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Professional development;● Service to the university or the department.

These practical suggestions are, as noted earlier, a starting point in making explicit the hidden labor of the intersecting threads of “...teaching, research, and service” that are necessary for effective community projects in composition (“CCCC Statement on Community-Engaged Projects” par. 4). By making labor practices explicit, we can theorize and, just as importantly, practice a more equitable and sustainable approach to community-engaged projects in composition. Doing so allows faculty members an opportunity to live a life of greater quality than current labor structures often allow and greater space in which they can create more hopeful narratives for themselves and others. Subsequently, implementing more equitable and sustainable practices for community-engaged projects allows the university to align its missions and its theories with the lives of the people the university ultimately does and should serve—within the institution and beyond.

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