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Odbayar Batsaikhan  
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**Perceptions of Faculty and Administration on the Value of Service-Learning in the  
Tenure and Promotion Process at a Public Midwestern University**

**By  
Odbayar Batsaikhan**

**This Dissertation is Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for  
the Educational Doctorate Degree  
in Educational Leadership**

**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

**Mankato, Minnesota**

**June 2022**

Date:

Perceptions of Faculty and Administration on the Value of Service-Learning in the  
Tenure and Promotion Process at a Public Midwestern University

Odbayar Batsaikhan

This dissertation has been approved and examined by following members of the student's  
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**PERCEPTIONS OF THE FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION ON THE VALUE  
OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE TENURE AND PROMOTION PROCESS AT  
A PUBLIC MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**ODBAYAR BATSAIKHAN**

**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL DOCTORATE DEGREE IN  
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study examines the perceptions of faculty and administration of the value of service-learning in the promotion and tenure process at Minnesota State University, Mankato, a midsized, Midwestern public university. The study aims to determine the answers to three main questions: what barriers and logistical issues do faculty face? Is the scholarship of community-engagement recognized and considered equal to other forms of traditional scholarship? Does MSU, Mankato value service-learning in the promotion and tenure process? The researcher employed a phenomenological study to answer the research questions. He used semi-structured interviews of ten participants – nine full-time tenure-track faculty who utilize service-learning as a teaching method, and a dean who supervises community-engaged faculty. The main themes identified in the interviews showed that the community-engaged faculty face many barriers to implementing service-learning programs. These barriers include difficulty in finding community partners, too much additional work, and lack of support from the university. Community-engaged scholarship is not valued and recognized as much as the faculty participants would like for it to be, and service-learning is not valued as much as more traditional forms of scholarship in the tenure and promotion process.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

Many studies show that service-learning is beneficial to students, faculty, local communities, and educational institutions (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007; Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Mitchell, 2017). The question remains, however, whether the university reward system reflects community-engaged faculty's work in terms of tenure and promotion. Are community-engaged faculty, including those who utilize service-learning as a teaching method, valued equally compared to faculty utilizing other, traditional scholarship components such as teaching, research, and service? Or is service-learning absorbed into more traditional scholarship components when faculty document their work?

### **Background of the Problem**

According to Thomas (1998), community-engaged scholars are faculty involved in cooperative extension, outreach, continuing education programs, student volunteer initiatives, applied research, service-learning, and much more. The community-engaged scholarship is described as the inclusion of all types of scholarly and pedagogical activities that involve collaboration with local communities or are beneficial to them (*Engaged scholarship*, 2016). Engaged scholarship and community-engaged scholarship refer to the same concept, and the terms are used interchangeably.

A few problems have been found among community-engaged scholars and the value of their work in the institutional rewards system in general. One of these problems is a lack of recognition of community-engagement as a form of scholarship among many

faculty, department chairs, provosts, and university administrations. Researchers suggest that community engagement is not recognized as much as community-engaged scholars' other work, and service-learning is not valued as much in the tenure and promotion process and reward systems (Vernaza et al., 2013). Also, faculty who incorporate service-learning into their classes face many barriers. These include, among others, prioritization of traditional scholarly products over community-engaged scholarship, lack of institutional support, and logistical issues (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007; Beere et al., 2011; Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007).

This study is specifically interested in researching community-engaged faculty's and deans' perceptions on the promotion and tenure process with respect to the value service-learning plays within the educational organization, particularly at a public Midwestern university.

### **Community-Engagement Is a Type of Scholarship**

For many years, scholarship has been made up of a narrow set of activities. The definition of scholarship has been in need of an update for some time (Vernaza et al., 2013). In 1990, Ernest Boyer tried to redefine and provide the framework of scholarship in a special report for the Carnegie Foundation. According to Boyer (1990), scholarship has four dimensions: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Scholarship of discovery includes research that provides new information and expands human knowledge. The scholarship of integration is a discipline that allows us to understand existing knowledge. The scholarship of application includes activities that link knowledge to the needs of society (Vernaza et al., 2013). The scholarship of teaching

consists of many different types of pedagogical activities. These four dimensions are typically considered to be accepted forms of scholarship and are recognized across disciplines.

Boyer (1990), however, proposed a new component of scholarship in addition to the existing ones: scholarship of engagement. This form of scholarship applies “the scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching to addressing social, civil, and ethical problems” (Vernaza et al., 2013, p. 86). This new model of scholarship recognizes and values service-learning and other community-engaged scholarships (CES).

According to Frank et al. (2009), in the promotion and tenure process, administrators were more inclined to recognize the practice of service-learning outside of the general teaching category if the service-learning resulted in peer-reviewed journal articles, illustrating deference to the scholarship of discovery. Service-learning is broadly applicable in the tenure and promotion process, but the extent to which it is applied depends on the faculty’s ability to document its efficacy (Frank et al., 2009).

### **Challenges of Community-Engaged Scholars**

Vernaza et al. (2013) claim that often, community-engagement projects do not keep close documentation on student learning aspects. Community-engagement projects are not traditionally viewed as scholarship because of a lack of learning analyses. Also, there is not much evidence of assessment in service-learning projects. Faculty simply do not record service-learning in engineering classes, for instance. Use of service-learning is not reported to peers within the same disciplines. In other words, not enough publicity

within the institution may contribute to the challenge of prompting service-learning as a worthy form of scholarship (Vernaza et al., 2013).

Moreover, since service-learning is a non-traditional method and engagement is a new type of scholarship, service-learning may not be encouraged or utilized at the institutional level. As a result, some junior faculty may delay or reduce the use of service-learning or are not willing to incorporate it into their dossiers (Vernaza et al., 2013).

Service-learning projects also require a higher level of collaboration among faculty and other stakeholders, such as students and communities, who may be difficult for junior faculty to access readily. In addition, these collaborations complicate the service-learning process, and thus the projects may have a higher chance of failing among inexperienced faculty. Figure 1.1 shows the overlap of community engagement into the areas of research, teaching, and service (Kellogg Commission on Community-engaged Scholarship in Health Professions, 2005).

**Figure 1.1**

*Community-Engaged Teaching, Research, and Service*



*Note: From Linking Scholarship and Communities: Report on the Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions (p. 13), by the Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions, 2005, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. Copyright 2005 by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. Reprinted with permission.*

There are risks for faculty who participate in community-engaged scholarship, and career challenges are one of them. According to Jordan (2009), there are only a few professional development pathways and mechanisms by which faculty and graduate students can improve their knowledge of community-engaged scholarship. Professional development opportunities are isolated, and they do not greatly advance the institutionalization of community-engaged scholarship. Furthermore, scholarship of engagement is considered to be a weaker model than the other four, so in classification, it is often absorbed into scholarships of teaching or application (Vernaza et al., 2013).

Another challenge for the community-engaged scholarship is a lack of accepted vehicles for peer-reviews and publications for engaged scholars (Jordan, 2009). In order to be considered a scholarship, there must be peer-reviews and publications on the subject matter. A lack of peer-reviews is a real barrier for community-engaged scholars, especially when the consideration of publications outweighs their other work in the tenure and promotion process (Colledge, 2014). The lack of understanding of community-engaged scholarship by the tenure and promotion committee is an issue as well (Jordan). The community-engaged scholarship is considered a “soft” social science (Gibson, 2006, cited in Jordan, 2009). Moreover, the difficulty of balancing teaching with research scholarship in CES is often not understood or appreciated by non-CES peers and committees (Jordan, 2009).

## **Needs of Community-Engaged Scholarship Tied to University Reward Systems**

Institutional rewards systems are complex, nuanced, and facing many challenges in recent decades. Ranks of professors have been declining and promotion and tenure tracks are defined differently from institution to institution (Boyer, 1990; Price & Cotton, 2006). According to Waltman et al. (2012), non-tenure-track faculty made up nearly 50 percent of all faculty at research universities and 62 percent at all degree-granting institutions in the United States. The tenure and promotion processes are “unevenly distributed across various constituents on campuses” (Bringle & Hatcher, 2006, p.6). For instance, chairs, deans, promotion and tenure committees, provosts, and presidents have different perceptions of the process and their control over it.

Nonetheless, these rewards systems have a need to include community-engaged scholars. According to Plater et al. (2005), educational institutions must consider a few crucial factors for rewarding community-engaged scholars in the promotion and tenure process: criteria, standards, and evidence. Criteria and standards for tenure and promotion should be clear and straightforward so that engaged scholars can document their service-learning-related dossiers with no confusion.

In addition, educational policies and practices do not create effective environments for engaged faculty to thrive and use service-learning-related dossiers to get promoted or tenured, nor has service-learning been institutionalized (Kletin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowak, 2013). According to O’Meara (2001), college and university administrations need to step up by starting conversations, putting service-learning in place for reward structures, and appointing the right people for promotion and tenure

committees (O'Meara, 2001). O'Meara found that not only provosts and deans can support or reject engaged faculty's work for reward systems, but senior faculty can be a roadblock in the process as well.

Service-learning is academic work and ought to be interpreted, analyzed, and evaluated for the tenure and promotion process as such (Furco, 1996). The tenure and promotion committees in colleges and universities should consider service-learning as a type of scholarship of engagement and consider it as an academic contribution based on faculty-provided evidence. According to O'Meara et al. (2015), if community-engaged faculty are less productive in publication, they struggle to achieve promotion and tenure. Moreover, community-engaged faculty must be especially familiar with disciplinary constraints and supports from their supervisors and administrators. Otherwise, the promotion and tenure process will be challenging for them (Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007; Cooper, 2014; O'Meara, 2009).

In short, community-engaged scholarship faces the following problems: community-engagement/service-learning is not recognized as scholarship, community-engagement/service-learning is a new scholarship and thus is not valued as much as other traditional scholarships in tenure and promotion, many community-engaged scholars do not document their service-learning-related dossiers into their tenure files, and even if they do, the dossiers are not valued as much as other traditional dossiers.

### **Problem Statement**

The degree to which the university administration and faculty personnel committees value service-learning as a component of scholarship and the perceptions of



engaged faculty concerning how service-learning is tied to tenure and promotion at a public Midwestern university are subjects that have not previously been studied. The researcher is interested in learning how community-engaged scholars are recognized (especially those who specifically use service-learning), how they perceive themselves, and the extent to which they are valued for their work at the university in the tenure and promotion process. Thus far, there has been very little research that reveals perceptions on whether or not faculty who utilize service-learning receive sufficient support from their peers, deans, and provosts as compared to those who utilize other forms of scholarship.

Is scholarship of engagement recognized as scholarship? How is it valued in the promotion and tenure process at public Midwestern universities? How should engagement be documented, and what amount of documentation is considered sufficient for tenure and promotion? These are the questions the researcher sought to answer from engaged faculty at a public Midwestern university, which for the purpose of this study, was narrowed down to Minnesota State University, Mankato.

### **Purpose of the Research**

This qualitative study used a research approach called phenomenology, which examines individuals' lived experiences within the world (Neubauer et al., 2019). A phenomenology is an effective approach that allows the researcher to delve deeper into the opinions and experiences of administrators, faculty personnel committees, and community-engaged faculty who utilize service-learning in their classes at the university to find out their perceptions on how the university administration values engaged

scholarship, specifically service-learning, in the promotion and tenure process at a public Midwestern university.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, the researcher seeks to learn the perceptions, experiences, and opinions of faculty and deans concerning the value of service-learning in the tenure and promotion process at a public Midwestern university – Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU Mankato). The main research questions are:

1. What are the barriers and logistical issues that faculty at a public Midwestern university face in incorporating and implementing service-learning into their classes?
2. Is scholarship of engagement recognized and considered equal to other traditional forms of scholarship?
3. What is the value of service-learning in promotion and tenure at a public Midwestern university?

### **Significance of the Research**

The researcher conducted a mock project which evaluated the value of service-learning in the tenure and promotion process at a public Midwestern university for a qualitative research class in the spring semester of 2020. According to the mock project findings, faculty documented their service-learning-related dossiers into their promotion and tenure files. University administration, particularly deans, were supportive of service-learning and engaged faculty for the tenure and promotion process. The findings were completely opposite to what the current literature suggests, which calls into question the

accuracy of the information reported in the findings section of the mock project. This discrepancy could be attributed to the fact that in the mock project, the researcher interviewed only two individuals, so the sample size was extremely small. In addition, those two interviewees each belong to the faculty of different departments but report to the same dean, who may be an exception to the rule.

Aside from the researcher's mock proposal, there are no actual studies found to date related to how the university administration and faculty personnel committees actually value service-learning at this particular public Midwestern university. This is the first time that faculty barriers in the integration of service-learning have been analyzed, and the value of service-learning in faculty promotion and tenure at this particular university has been researched. Faculty and deans' perceptions of the value of service-learning in promotion and tenure, engaged scholarship, and their evaluations in reward systems have remained a big question mark up to this point. The researcher sees these issues as a significant gap in the literature and seeks to shed light on the reality of the situation in order to create a dialogue on the subject.

### **Delimitations**

The participants in this study were limited to a small number of engaged, tenure-track faculty who teach in various departments at MSU, Mankato. The researcher attempted to sample a small number of deans and approximately two engaged faculty from four or five different departments who utilize service-learning in their classes, with a target sample size of eight to ten participants. Since the participants are from one university, the study cannot represent the whole of the Midwest, but future studies could

broaden the scope of their findings to much larger populations. For instance, future studies could focus on researching the perspectives of faculty personnel committees, deans, chairs and provosts, and administrators at another public Midwestern university or of several other universities around the area. Also, future studies could include and review engaged faculty's tenure files to find the scholarship of engagement sections and investigate how many different types of dossiers are used and if they are documented sufficiently.

### **Data Collection**

Potential subjects were identified via the university's Civic Engagement Office list of engaged faculty. The study participants were full-time tenure track faculty members. Invitation for the interviews was sent via email to request participation. Recruitment targets for the proposed study were 1-2 engaged faculty from 4-5 different departments, around 7-10 participants total, who use service-learning in their classes at MSU, Mankato, along with school deans who are influential in recommending and evaluating faculty for promotion and tenure. See Chapter IV for final recruitment data.

Participants were asked to engage in semi-structured interviews with the researcher in the first stage. The interview questions aimed to get to know subjects' background information, level of experience using service-learning, and their opinions on how the university values engaged scholars who utilize service-learning in the tenure and promotion process. In addition, the deans of departments were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Civic Engagement.** “Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes” (Erich, 2000, p. vi). The researcher views civic engagement and community engagement as essentially the same concept and will use them interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

**Service-Learning.** “A form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes” (Jacoby, 1996, p.5 cited in Flecky & Gitlow, 2010).

**Community-Engaged scholarship.** Engaged scholars are involved in service-learning, action research, applied research, collaborative research, intentional civic practice, and student volunteer initiatives (O’Meara et al., 2010).

**Promotion and Tenure.** Academic tenure is an employment commitment from the university and the fundamental element of its faculty structure at most colleges and universities in the United States (Larsen et al., 2019).

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to review the research on service-learning, its benefits and challenges in utilization, and its institutionalization. Also, this review will center on what is considered scholarship, the concept of scholarship of engagement, the tenure, and promotion process, and how higher education institutions value service-learning in the promotion and tenure process. The literature review consists of the following sections: Service-Learning;, Carnegie Classification for Civic Engagement;, Scholarship, Promotion and Tenure;, and Service-Learning in the Promotion and Tenure Process.

### Service-Learning

#### History of the Service-Learning Movement

The term *service-learning* was coined in 1967 in the works of Robert Sigmon and William Ramsey (Giles & Eyler, 1994). However, even as early as the 1930s, John Dewey emphasized society's need for democratic citizens and their wellbeing (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002). Service-learning was a new social and educational concept in Dewey's time, and it was widely criticized for not being theoretically formulated at the beginning of its development. The great work of John Dewey helped to theorize service-learning as a legitimate field in experiential education (Giles & Eyler, 1994).

Along with Dewey, many other educational philosophers have contributed to the research of service-learning. For example, Byers & Gray argue (2012) that the National and Community Service Acts of 1993 paved the way for universities to provide service-

learning experiences. Thanks to this act, it has become possible to support a partnership between academic and community initiatives (Flecky & Gitlow, 2010). The seminal works of Freire, Kolb, and Mezirow formed the conceptual construct of the service-learning movement in the United States (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). Stemming from the works of previous experiential theorists, Kolb (1984) designed a circular model of reflective thought and action that demonstrated how experiential learning might be linked to social change.

In addition to individual researchers, organizations like Campus Compact for National Service, The American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC), the American Association of Higher Education, Learn and Serve America, Ameri-Corps, and many others have resources available to assist in the promotion of service-learning (Mitchell, 2017). Campus Compact for National Service has been a federal government agency since 1985. It was one of the first organized units in higher education to promote service-learning (Mitchell, 2017). According to its official website, Campus Compact is a coalition of more than 1000 colleges and universities that “build democracy through civic education and community development” (Campus Compact, n.d.). Along with Campus Compact, Learn and Serve America (LSA) has been involved with service-learning programs in academia for many years. LSA has been working with all levels of institutions and acts as a significant resource for institutions and organizations worldwide (Mitchell).

According to O’Meara et al. (2010), community engagement in many forms “has been one of the major innovations within higher education within the last 20 years”

(O'Meara et al., 2010, p.84). Community engagement's contribution to higher education is significant because faculty members embrace community engagement as their academic tool, and it is tied to colleges' and universities' academic missions (O'Meara et al., 2010).

### **Difference between Service-Learning and Volunteering**

Many people mistakenly interchange the terms *service-learning* and *volunteer service*. Volunteer service, while valuable, lacks a specific connection with curriculum and structured reflection that is essential to service-learning (O'Byrne, 2001).

Service-learning is a course-based service experience that produces the best outcomes when meaningful service activities are related to course material through reflection activities such as directed writings, small group discussions, and class presentations (O'Byrne, 2001). Unlike practicum and internships, the experiential activity in a service-learning course is not necessarily skill-based within the context of professional education. Service-learning provides an additional means for reaching educational objectives, and academic credit is appropriate for service activities when learning objectives associated with the service are identified and evaluated (O'Byrne, 2001).

### **Defining Service-Learning**

The two components of service-learning are service and the learning that occurs via service experiences, reflection, and relationship with the community (Flecky & Gitlow, 2010). There are a couple of widely accepted definitions for service-learning. According to Jacoby, "service-learning is a form of experiential learning in which



students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (Jacoby, 1996, p.5 cited in Flecky & Gitlow, 2010). Service and learning go hand in hand, and they function together to address community partners and their needs.

According to Bringle and Hatcher (1996), service-learning is “a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (p. 222).

Service-learning represents one form of experiential learning. It combines academic knowledge, practical hands-on experience, and civic engagement. Moreover, according to Howard (2001), “the service-learning must be relevant to the community and to the content of the academic course, meaningful to the community and to the students, and developed and formulated with the community” (p.23). Service-learning works well when academic learning institutions collaborate with local communities to identify and attempt to solve social issues.

As stated by Wurdinger & Carlson (2010), service-learning has three different stages: planning to fill community needs, action, and reflection. According to Wurdinger and Carlson, “service alone (action) without intentional educational aspects (planning and reflection) would not meet the accepted criteria for service-learning” (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010, p. 67).

According to Mitchell (2017), there are three main principles of critical service-learning: bringing attention to social change, seeking to redistribute power, and developing an authentic relationship. The principle of bringing attention to social change explores what the key concerns and issues we see are, and how to address them (Mitchell, 2017).

The principle of seeking to redistribute is all about community members themselves identifying the problems they are facing in a community, rather than being directed by the hierarchy in the school system. Participating in volunteer work or service-learning activities in the community can develop a real connection to the community beyond service-learning for students (Mitchell, 2017). Moreover, according to (Hollander & Hartley, 2005 cited in O'Meara & Niehaus, 2009), "service-learning is a way to enhance student civic responsibility and political consciousness, as well as a democracy" (p.19).

### **Service-Learning Benefits to Students**

Service-learning is beneficial to students in many ways. Students feel an increase in self-efficacy, a sense of confidence, a tendency to include service work in their career, a feeling of being connected with individuals and communities, and a greater understanding of diversity when they are part of service-learning activities (Bingle & Hatcher, 1996). When students spend significant amounts of time working with community groups, they benefit from exploring career possibilities, assessing personal values, dispelling stereotypes, and establishing a link between theory and reality (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007). Service-learning allows students the opportunity to

practice critical thinking skills and apply them to learn in real-world settings while meeting authentic needs in communities. Also, service-learning presents students with real-world problems to confront, alternatives to consider, and solutions to find. Service-learning challenges students to work collegially, communicate successfully, and acquire and exercise new skills (Griffith, 2005).

Research indicates that service-learning, when well designed and managed, can contribute to student learning and growth (Astin & Sax, 1998; Chang, 2002; Hamm & Houck, 1998). Service-learning is an effective pedagogy on college and university campuses. Moreover, service-learning yields positive outcomes for students' understanding of course content (Jacoby, 2015, cited in Lewing, 2019), higher-order thinking (Starge, 2000 cited in Lewing, 2019), moral development (Boss, 1994, cited in Lewing, 2019), and spiritual growth (Eyler & Giles, 1999, cited in Lewing, 2019). Many studies suggest that service-learning also positively impacts personal efficacy, interpersonal skills, and civic engagement (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007).

### **Benefits to Faculty**

Service-learning, being a faculty-driven initiative, is beneficial to faculty as well. Faculty who use service-learning discover that it brings new life to the classroom, enhances performance on traditional measures of learning, increases student interest in the subject, teaches new problem-solving skills, and makes teaching more enjoyable (Mitchell, 2017). According to O'Meara and Niehaus (2009), service-learning is a natural extension of disciplinary goals for some faculty who desire to teach their subjects well. According to Cooper (2014), faculty involved in service-learning receive constant

feedback about the course, are informed of the latest developments in service-learning projects, get reports about students' work that is being done in the field, and stay on the cutting edge in their field. Moreover, faculty who utilize service-learning "gain an increased understanding of their discipline, of the community application of the field, of an organization that supports their communities, and of themselves as citizens" (Clayton, Hess, Jaeger, Jameson, & McGuire, 2013 cited in Lewing, 2019, p.11).

### **Benefits to Communities**

Service-learning has a positive impact on local communities. Choosing to partner with universities that put effort into distributing resources to support service-learning (such as promotion and tenure incentives and advancement to graduation) can lead to more successful outcomes for community groups. Such campuses may be more effective in linking students to community life and creating greater participant investment (Basinger and Bartholomew, 2006; Edwards et al., 2001; Marullo and Edwards, 2000). Service-learning can increase the visibility of the partner organizations for the public as well (Bushouse, 2005, cited in Lewing, 2019).

Maurasse (2002) argues that an era of social responsibility is driving many universities' interest in service and service-learning. As a result, university-community partnerships, including service-learning, are seen as avenues not only for students to learn but for the university to help the community in tangible and sustainable ways (Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

Moreover, when faculty are promoted and get tenure, and those community and university partnerships are secured, local community members feel like they are invested

in the faculty as well (Larsen et al., 2019). Although colleges and universities have been paying more attention to service-learning benefits, service-learning still has not been fully integrated into most college curricula (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). The main problem is a lack of commitment from institutions, as well as minimal administrative support, faculty participation, and funding (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000).

### **Quality of Service-Learning**

Quality service-learning includes these key elements: at least twenty hours of direct interaction with the community partner over one academic term, structured reflections, and careful assessment of site selection. Mabry found (1998) that service-learning seems to be more effective when students provide at least 15 to 20 hours of service per semester and are in frequent contact with the beneficiaries of their service project. According to Mitchell (2017), personal reflection is very important before and after students engage in service-learning projects. They must consider the answers to three questions: who am I, why am I here, and what can I do to affect change on this issue? (Mitchell, 2017). These questions challenge students to think more deeply about the issues and reflect on their learning more effectively.

Werner and McVaugh (2000) recommend several strategies for increasing the quality and interest of service-learning, including giving students a choice and control of their projects. From the students' perspectives, meaningful service experiences occur when the student takes the initiative, shows responsibility, and works as a colleague with the site supervisor and community members (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Program quality and structure play essential roles in the quality of service-learning experiences (Baker-Boosamra et al., 2006; Teranishi, 2007). Successful experiences generally include engagement (connecting classroom experiences with community service), journaling (reflecting on one's experience), multicultural experience (working with a population different than one's own), and community partnership (working with the community and student to develop a mutually agreeable project) (Corso, 2008).

According to Morton (1995), there are two types of service-learning practices: thin and thick. "Thin" service-learning lacks integrity and depth when compared to "thick" service-learning (O'Meara & Niehaus, 2009). Also, Hatcher (2000) found that adding service to the university mission, creating support structures for service, and heightening publicity for community engagement also increased university support for community engagement. Such increased investment from faculty and student participants leads to greater attention and interest in service-learning projects and may result in higher quality projects for community groups.

According to Franz (2011), there are four types of service-learning programs relating to their emphasis on student learning:

Service-LEARNING: service goals are secondary, and learning goals are primary

SERVICE-learning: service outcomes are primary, and learning goals are secondary

Service-learning: service outcomes and learning goals are separate

SERVICE-LEARNING: service outcomes and learning goals are equal and enhance one another.

SERVICE-LEARNING is the preferred choice for designing future service-learning programs (Franz, 2011, p.18).

### **Stages of Implementing Service-Learning**

Instructors use many different instructional strategies when teaching. Service-learning has been implemented successfully as an instructional method in elementary and secondary schools, as well as community colleges and universities (Griffith, 2005; Yoder, Retish, & Wade, 1996). Bringle & Hatcher (1996) define five stages of implementing service-learning: preparation, planning, implementation, assessment, and celebration/demonstration.

*Preparation* involves a variety of activities, including identifying a community need, establishing a goal/objective for the service-learning project, establishing the knowledge and skills necessary for the project, and determining resources and activities needed for the project (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Kaye, 2004).

*Planning* includes developing connections with community resources for the project (Kaye, 2004), determining the number of participants, establishing the type of project and whether students will have a choice in their standard of the project, the number of hours required for the project, and the expected outcomes or forms of assessment for evaluating project outcomes and student learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).

*Implementation* of service-learning should include frequent connections of the project to academic content (Cress et al., 2005). Astin et al. (2000) found that instructors who frequently connected the service-learning project to academic learning facilitated a

learning relationship whereby the service experience enhanced the academic understanding, which, in turn, increased the service experience. Throughout the implementation of the service project, students should reflect on the project and academic learning to assess their knowledge. This process ensures that participation in the service-learning project is impacting academic education and enhancing social learning or understanding of diversity (Rhoads, 1997).

*Assessments* often focus on evaluating the course and/or evaluating student academic and social or civic learning. Cooks and Scharrer (2006) presented several methods for assessing students' social learning, which included interviews, focus groups, journal assignment analysis, and analysis of videotaped interactions. Bringle and Hatcher suggested (1996) using purposeful reflections linked to course objectives that are analyzed using a rubric or a separate activity such as a poster presentation or essays. Storage used (2000) an analysis of students' journals to determine that students had reflected thoughtfully on the connections between lecture information, readings, and hands-on experiences.

Kaye defines (2004) the final stage of *demonstration* as allowing students the opportunity to discuss and openly exhibit their work through different formats, such as displays, performances, and presentations.

### **Difficulties in Using Service-Learning**

Service-learning is a curriculum-driven initiative, so faculty involvement is crucial (Altbach, 2011; Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Darby & Knight-McKenna, 2016; Furco & Moely, 2012; Sedlak et al., 2003). While the impact of service-learning on



students has been studied extensively (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kendrick, 1996; Myers-Lipton, 1996; Rhoads, 1997; Rhoads & Howard, 1998; Schneider, 1999), a gap exists between the idea of service-learning and the reality of faculty initiation and implementation of this pedagogy in higher education.

McIntyre, Webb & Hite conducted (2015) a study on faculty incorporating service learning in the marketing curriculum. Based on their findings, it can be argued that once faculty become aware of service-learning, understand its merits, and become interested, they contemplate adopting and using it in their own curricula.

There are many common deterrents mentioned by faculty across multiple studies: time, logistics, funding, student outcomes, community outcomes, reward structure, and comfort with the ability to effectively use service-learning (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007).

Service-learning requires interdisciplinary work. It may appear to be outside of the faculty's comfort zone, requiring faculty to work beyond what they were hired for (Bloomgraden & O'Meara, 2007). Moreover, faculty refrain from getting involved in civic engagement and service-learning if the "reward system prioritizes traditional scholarly products such as journal articles and scholarly books over products resulting from community-based efforts such as reports, presentation, position papers, and professional development materials" (Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007, p.7). According to Ward (1998), substantial faculty participation is one of the greatest challenges.

According to Banerjee and Hausafus (2007), lack of peer and institutional support, the time needed to establish service projects, and difficulty in evaluating service-learning experiences were the major barriers cited by service-learning faculty.

Respondents in this study received the greatest encouragement from their department chairperson and college dean (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007).

A key piece in creating successful service-learning experiences is creating institutional support for these types of learning community approaches (Furco & Moely, 2012; Hartley & Saltmarsh, 2016). Butin suggests (2010) that the first step is getting faculty and students to buy into its merits and institutional leaders to show commitment. Research has long pointed out a common issue of the faculty time commitment (Beere et al., 2011; Butin, 2010; Cooper, 2014; Cronley et al., 2014; Darby & Knight-McKenna, 2016; Davis, 2009) as a deterrent for incorporating this active pedagogy.

Faculty may be willing to change the way they teach using service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). Researchers argue that integrating service should not undermine faculty research and teaching, but in order to be successful, it should blend both efforts with public engagement (Beere et al., 2011).

Women and minorities often experience a greater burden in the utilization of service-learning. Butin (2006) suggested that service-learning is utilized mostly by marginalized faculty who are people of color, women, untenured faculty, and by faculty in the “softer” sciences, such as education and social work, and that service-learning efforts do not tend to lead to promotional opportunities when compared with other forms of scholarship. On average, male faculty spend significantly more time engaging in research activities while female faculty do more service (Guarino & Borden, 2016). Although female faculty do a disproportionate amount of service work, service does not receive equal credit in academia compared with other forms of scholarship. This could be

attributed to the fact that service is harder to quantify than teaching and research (Gentry & Stokes, 2015).

Moreover, Gentry and Stokes (2015) suggested that promotion and tenure are difficult to earn for those who engage in service activities and limited research production. Other faculty are reluctant to implement service-learning because of the perception that it is not relevant to their coursework or that logistical issues are overwhelming. If service-learning is not planned and supported well, it can be a burden and will not make much difference. Some community members' experiences illustrate the good and the bad of service learning, loosely defined as community service that supplements and enhances what students learn in a classroom.

### **Difficulties of Implementing Service-Learning**

Despite its many advantages, service-learning can at times be as much a curse as a blessing, especially to an organization that lacks the administrative structure and money to train and supervise students. If service-learning is not well coordinated by the academic institution, it can place quite a burden on the community partners (Furco, 2002, cited in Lewing, 2019).

A universally positive service-learning experience usually requires a considerable investment of time and planning on the part of academic institutions and faculty. Ideally, service-learning enriches a particular course of study, and students have the opportunity to reflect in the classroom on their experiences. In reality, service-learning can often seem unconnected to any curriculum — painting park benches, for example. Service-

learning outcomes and sustainability of the programs usually depend on the practice becoming institutionalized within the organization (Furco, 2002, cited in Lewing, 2019).

### **Institutionalizing Service-Learning**

There are two main components involved in institutionalizing campus-community service-learning partnerships at a university that may have distinct impacts on community groups: (1) integrating service-learning participation into the fabric of the university (e.g., incorporating service-learning into core processes like student graduation requirements or faculty tenure evaluations) and (2) formalizing service-learning by creating formal organizational structures and accountability measures to shape participation (e.g., a stand-alone service-learning program office, full-time personnel, and separate accountability structures for service-learning offices) (Keeley & Fotheringham, 2009).

Colleges and universities institutionalize service-learning for long-term sustainability. Institutionalization can help to prevent service-learning from becoming marginalized by issues such as insufficient support, poor conceptualization, superficial partnerships with local communities, and more (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011, cited in Lewing, 2019). An important aspect of the institutionalization of service-learning is the personnel decisions made in the hiring, annual review, promotion, and tenure processes. Faculty play a critical role in the implementation process of service-learning, as well as its sustainability (Lewing, 2019). Also, the faculty's commitment to adopting and continuing to use service-learning is equally important as the institutional environment and its practice by their leaders (Lewing, 2019).

Klentin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowak (2013) define eight common administrative elements of successful service-learning institutionalization. These elements are as follows: inclusion of service-learning language in the institutional mission statement, a centralized service-learning office, a dedicated staff, internal funding, training/development opportunities, faculty rewards including release time and program assessment, and a service-learning advisory board (Klentin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowak, 2013).

Moreover, according to Klentin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowak (2013), in order to further institutionalize service-learning in educational institutions, the organization must create a culture that encourages the utilization of service-learning and faculty “buy-in.” Similarly, according to Chism, Palmer, and Price (2013, cited in Lewing, 2019), faculty are the main players in the institutionalization of service-learning in colleges and universities.

According to Bringle and Hatcher (2000), the faculty role in institutionalizing service-learning should not be underestimated as faculty are primarily responsible for the direction and design of the curriculum. The “top-down” approach is not optimal for institutionalizing service-learning. Policies are applied differently in departments based on their culture (Keeley & Fotheringham, 2009). Hatcher argued (2000) that autonomous organizational structures in her study allowed mutual decision-making between service-learning programs and community partners and were crucial in encouraging long-term partnerships. Likewise, Bringle, Hatcher, and Games (1997) and Bringle and Hatcher

found that an autonomous service-learning office or an affiliation with service-focused Campus Compact led to greater service-learning activity on university campuses.

There are many ways to make a difference in the institutionalization of service-learning at different levels of administration (O'Meara, 2001). At the higher level of administration, provosts can play a critical role in "sparking conversations about rewarding service as scholarship on their campuses, providing a vision . . . choosing and supporting the right people for leadership positions . . . providing faculty development and promotion and tenure" (O'Meara, 2001, p.5).

Deans and directors, as mid-level administrators, are crucial to the development of "service-learning friendly" policies as well (O'Meara, 2001). "They can act as cheerleaders, work on democratic processes, gain faculty consensus, draft documents, and keep committee processes on track" (O'Meara, 2001, p. 5). Deans of colleges usually oversee reward systems in their departments. Without their support, service-learning is highly unlikely to be implemented as a form of scholarship (O'Meara, 2001).

Some leading universities have an office of service-learning to help develop service-learning-based courses. The service-learning offices gather resources, provide instructional support, and organize faculty development (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).

### **Service-Learning at Minnesota State University (MSU), Mankato**

At the university that the researcher attends, Minnesota State University, Mankato, service-learning experiences are integrated into course curricula and link community service with academic concepts by placing students to work with local communities. These service-learning experiences are incorporated into several academic

programs at MSU, Mankato: majors, minors, and certificates (Mitchell, 2017). Some of the programs require students to participate in service-learning, which is put in place by faculty.

According to the Academic Service-Learning guide at MSU, Mankato, they have a wide range of learning opportunities that connect school and community activities, including community service, field experiences, internships, volunteering, and service-learning. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) focuses its attention on academic service-learning, while the Community Engagement Office focuses on volunteerism, community service, and special projects (mnsu.edu, n.d.). For professional development, faculty usually request help from the CETL. The Academic Service-Learning guide states that the CETL staff offer service-learning support and training to faculty; however, the researcher found that this has not been offered for several years (mnsu.edu, n.d.). While it is known that some faculty use service-learning in their courses, the actual number of classes that use service-learning per semester at MSU, Mankato is hard to pin down, and there are no official statistics. The researcher estimates that approximately 10-15 faculty periodically utilize service-learning.

### **Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement**

The 2006 Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement accelerated the practice of civic engagement activities in higher education (Driscoll, 2014). The Carnegie Classification awards grants to colleges and universities which affirm the institutionalization of community engagement. The elective classification involves data collection and documentation of important aspects of institutional mission, identity, and

commitments and requires substantial effort invested by participating institutions (Higher Education for Public Purpose, 2017).

Institutions of higher education participate voluntarily, and it serves as a process of self-assessment and quality improvement on civic engagement (Higher Education for Public Purpose, 2017). According to Holland (2001), the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement measures: student learning, institutional commitment, institutionalization, partnership relationships, impacts on faculty, and impact of community capacity. Moreover, the classification measures monitoring and reporting on civic engagement, levels of student and faculty involvement in service-learning, and other engagement projects (Driscoll, 2014).

### **Scholarship**

Boyer urged (1994) higher educational institutions to make fundamental changes in the education system. He envisioned scholarship of engagement as a recognized scholarship (Bringle et al., 2006). According to Boyer (1996), “the academy must become a vigorous partner in searching for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and it must affirm its historic commitment to society” (pp. 19-20).

Boyer proposed (1994) that scholarship should be divided into four domains: discovery, integration, application, and teaching (Register & King, 2018). The scholarship of an application refers in part to higher education serving the greater public good by applying specific knowledge to solving community problems or to enriching the lives of the surrounding citizenry (Boyer, 1994). The scholarship of discovery refers to



research endeavors, and the scholarship of teaching involves being well-grounded in the literature, having the ability to communicate that knowledge to students, and also understanding how to improve student learning. Service-learning is just such a tool to accomplish discovery, integration, application, and effective teaching while at the same time contributing to the community college mission of service to the community.

Shulman (1999) introduced a new addition to types of scholarship, that of teaching (Register & King, 2018). According to Shulman, to attain the scholarship of teaching and learning, all faculty members should possess a base skillset (content expertise, clinical skills, research techniques) and a meta-professional skillset (psychometrics, conflict management, communication styles, instructional design, instructional delivery, financial development, policy analysis, and graphic design) (Register & King, 2018).

### **Community-Engaged Scholars (CES)**

In recent years, faculty have begun to demonstrate scholarship of engagement through service-learning activities, civic or community engagement, civic empowerment, applied action research, public collaborative research, open scholarship extension, community outreach, and research partnerships (Register & King, 2018). The faculty who take part in such activities are referred to as community-engaged scholars. Faculty are mostly stationed on-campus: teaching in classrooms, serving their university, or doing research. Sometimes faculty work off-campus, serving on the boards of community engagement and service-learning projects, contributing to a government task force, and consulting (Bringle et al., 2006). These are the characteristics of community-engaged

scholars. According to Bringle et al. (2006), teaching, research, service-learning, and community service can and often do intersect in engaged scholarship.

*Community involvement* and *civic engagement* are the terms mentioned most in engaged scholarship. Community involvement is usually defined by the location where faculty are doing their engaged scholarship work. Conversely, civic engagement requires community involvement as well as a process of community-engaged scholarship which occurs within the community (Bringle et al., 2006).

The scholarship of engagement encompasses university and community collaboration and its effect on social, ethical, and civic problems (Register & King, 2018). There is a need to value, define, describe, and differentiate community-engaged scholarship. When revising promotion and tenure policies to ensure appropriate regard for community-engaged scholarship, the first order of business is to affirm that the institution values community-engaged scholarship as part of its core mission (O'Meara et al., 2015).

According to Watson-Thompson (2018), a few steps must be taken in order to ensure factors and conditions that support success for the community-engaged scholarship. The first step is "pathways for developing a CES approach" (p. 7). Watson-Thompson suggested that "community-engaged scholars can leverage resources, including human and financial, in the community served" (p. 7). Faculty can be proactive by doing things such as writing grants for external funding, developing good relationships with local communities, and addressing community issues. Similarly, Moore and Ward (2010) suggested that available funding for an engaged scholarship can

make a huge difference. When community-engaged scholars get resources from external funds, non-engaged scholars at their universities become more supportive of what community-engaged scholars do and acknowledge the scholarship as legitimate science.

The second step is forming a system that celebrates and highlights examples of CES being used effectively. Community-engaged scholars need to champion other co-workers who are involved in community-engaged work both on and off-campus. In other words, the more community-engaged scholars working together, the better the outcomes of a community of practice (Watson-Thompson, 2018). The third step is encouraging and recognizing involvement in CES within the institution. In this step, it is important that faculty members who use service-learning are recognized institutionally via nominations and awards that highlight the hard work of the faculty (Watson-Thompson). According to Moore and Ward (2010), institutional commitment and support of service-learning and other engaged scholarship forms are crucial. The promotion and tenure processes are easier when universities are committed to supporting community-engaged scholarship, and this support creates a positive environment for the entire promotion and tenure process.

### **Needs of Community-Engaged Scholarship**

Many community-engaged scholars call for a change in the tenure and promotion process for the community-engaged scholarship. According to O'Meara et al. (2015), four items need to be changed for advancing engaged scholarship in the reward system. Firstly, community-engaged scholarship must be defined and described properly. It is important to define the scholarship within the broader context of faculty work and to

understand its value on campuses. According to Khanna (2008), tenure and promotion requirements are different from department to department within a college; redefining these requirements is key to community-engaged scholars knowing what is expected of them in order to succeed in getting tenured and promoted.

There is a need for identifying criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship. For MSU, Mankato, promotion and tenure criteria are articulated in the Inter-Faculty Organization's article 22. Faculty need to demonstrate and document five areas of scholarship from those listed in article 22. However, putting criteria in place is one thing, but actually carrying them out is entirely different. According to O'Meara et al. (2015), "clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique" should be applied to judge the quality and impact of community-engaged scholarship (p. 3).

In accordance with O'Meara et al. (2015), Anderson & Trinkle (2018) suggested that tenure and promotion policies and how the tenure and promotion process is carried out can differ significantly. Within departments and colleges or universities, some tenure and promotion criteria can be overlooked while others are overemphasized. This process can lead to differences in tenure and promotion in the same institutions and departments (Anderson & Trinkle, 2018).

Documentation and evidence of community-engaged scholarship in promotion and tenure is another issue that needs to be addressed. While there is some documentation of such research, it is vastly overshadowed by the volume of documentation of more traditional forms of scholarship. Community-engaged scholars often face the problem of

where and how to publish their work in peer-reviewed journal articles (O'Meara et al., 2015). If departments and colleges revise their tenure and promotion guidelines to require the acceptance of a certain number of community-engaged scholarly products, the community-engaged scholars' work will be valued even more. These community-engaged scholarly products include reports, studies, broadcasts, service-learning diagnostic services, and technical reports (O'Meara et al., 2015).

According to Khanna et al. (2008), community-engaged scholars should consider “rigorously documenting their contractual work and its peer evaluation at various levels” (p.8). This kind of documentation is a great contribution to the research, and it often equals, if not surpasses, the contributions made by articles in peer-reviewed journals.

### **Promotion and Tenure**

Academic tenure is an employment commitment from the university and its fundamental element at most colleges and universities in the United States (Larsen et al., 2019). This concept was formulated when the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) published the Declaration of Principles (AAUP, 1940). The main purpose of the Principles is, “to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure agreement upon procedures to ensure them in colleges and universities” (AAUP, 1940). The tenure and promotion process has developed since then, and its main focuses are academic freedom in research and teaching (Larsen et al., 2019). The term “academic freedom” refers to the full freedom granted to professors in research and the publication of their results. Also, professors have the freedom to discuss subjects in classrooms. However, they should be careful when discussing controversial content

unrelated to the subject they are teaching (Larsen et al., 2019). When professors speak and write about anything, they must not be censored by their institutions (AAUP).

The original objective of tenure was to provide faculty with job protection if they exercised academic freedom with controversial matters. But along the way, it became simply viewed as job security or essentially an assurance of sustained employment. To some, tenure embodies academic freedom for faculty, and for the university, it is perceived as an asset in recruiting and retaining the best faculty. To others, it is perceived as an impediment to professorial accountability and a constraint on university flexibility and finances (Chait, 2002).

After professors get tenure, they generally have permanent tenure, meaning that they can be terminated only for adequate cause. As Chait (2002) suggested, there is a bit of controversy concerning the guarantee of this academic freedom for the professor's lifetime. The U.S. congress outlawed mandatory retirement because of age discrimination, and as a result, when professors get tenured, they can work for a lifetime. Advocates of tenure argue that job security is crucial to preserving academic freedom. Lifetime tenure is a tool to protect professors from being penalized for their opinions (Bok, 2013).

There are three main promotion and tenure ranks: assistant, associate, and full professor. Additionally, there can be prefixes, suffixes, and modifiers to the titles depending on what subjects they teach and are qualified for: clinical, research, adjunct, visiting, and Emeritus (Boston University, 2007).

The first level of employment that is usually given to junior professors is an assistant professorship. Assistant professor is the lowest tier of academic rank at colleges and universities. Those who have served as assistant professors in certain higher education institutions can submit paperwork for becoming associate professors after several years (Stewart et al., 2009). Promotion and tenure paperwork is reviewed by promotion and tenure committees and department chairs (Larsen et al., 2019). Satisfactory performance usually leads to the rank of associate professor, professor, and tenure. This means that tenured faculty members retain their jobs. After tenure, associate professors submit their dossiers for the highest rank in the discipline: full professor (McGowan, 2010).

### **Tenure Track vs. Non-Tenure Track Faculty**

Appointments of professional titles of professors can be non-tenure track, tenure track, and tenured (Boston University, Classification of ranks and titles, 2007). The difference between these positions is very distinct. One of the key differences is that tenure tracks emphasize research, while non-tenure tracks emphasize teaching in most universities in the U.S. According to Boyer (1990), tenure track faculty at research universities usually prioritize research over teaching and service. For instance, at Indiana University, tenure track faculty are expected to demonstrate teaching, service, and research as opposed to non-tenure-track faculty's teaching and service emphasis (Indiana University faculty Affairs, 2018). There are typically two types of non-tenure positions in most universities, with some exceptions. The first one is adjunct professors, who are part-time with fixed appointments. They are usually hired to replace a faculty on leave or

cover some areas in which universities do not want to hire tenure track faculty (University of California, Berkeley, 2020). These types of faculty teach more classes and get paid less than tenure track ones. Lecturers are the second type of non-tenure position, and their contracts are longer than adjunct professors (University of California, Berkeley, 2020).

Employment of non-tenure-track faculty is increasing in U.S. higher education. By 2016, non-tenure-track faculty made up 48% of faculty at research universities and 73% at all degree-granting institutions (AAUP, 2018).

### **Promotion and Tenure Process**

Generally, faculty differ on how scholarship should be assessed (Gentry & Stokes, 2015). The procedural model features specific measures to reflect the significance of scholarship. When well-defined regulations are applied, it can be determined if the faculty candidate has met the established criteria (Gentry & Stokes, 2015). The judgment model allows the faculty committee to discuss and assess the merit of the candidate's scholarship. Fellow colleagues make the decision about the quality of the candidate's work and provide a defense of the assessment in an open forum (Gentry & Stokes, 2015).

Regarding the concerns about expectations for earning promotion and tenure, perceptions are that some factors are over-emphasized (Whittiaux et al., 2010). These factors include student evaluation of instructors and courses, peer-reviewed publications, and writing textbooks or book chapters. On the other hand, there are perceptions that the documentation of good teaching is underemphasized. Together, the perceptions may be



viewed as loopholes in the method of evaluating faculty for promotion and tenure (Whittiaux et al., 2010).

According to Kelsky (2019), all promotion and tenure processes are local. Faculty need to understand their own department's formal policies, informal practices, and culture. University norms and incentives play a big role in influencing the process as well.

Incorporating service-learning into one's teaching, research, and service does not come without its challenges, including its implications in the promotion and tenure process (Bloomgarden, 2007; O'Meara, 2009). Tenure traditionally focuses on a faculty member's teaching, scholarship, and service, although the extent of the focus on each of these is often dependent on the Carnegie Classification of the institution (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). While big research universities and elite liberal arts colleges depend on external reviewers for their tenure process, small teaching colleges and community colleges may not utilize any external reviewers but require internal letters of support instead (Kelsky, 2019).

According to Kelsky (2019), the general process of promotion and tenure is as follows: The tenured faculty in a department will generate a list of names, usually around eight candidates (Kelsky, 2019, p.4). These candidates' files will be assessed at the department level according to that specific department's guidelines, and a few will be selected and referred to the deans and then provosts for approval for tenure or promotion.

Some proposed improvements for the evaluation of teaching for promotion and tenure include (1) providing tenure-track faculty with all relevant written guidelines at the

time of hire; (2) ensuring that student rating instruments are reliable and valid; (3) offering mentoring to new faculty on the departmental and institutional culture; and (4) encouraging self-reflection and documentation of one's own teaching. Educational leaders in doctoral and research universities are encouraged to ensure that future faculty graduating from their institutions are better prepared for teaching (Whittiaux et al., 2010).

Woods (2006) noted that unless universities are forced or greatly pressured by new or disgruntled faculty, a very small number of universities would dare to make major changes to tenure criteria. Needed changes proposed by Chait include the availability of peers' portfolios for inspection by candidates who are up for promotion and tenure; established committees that reflect diversity; assurance that research scholarship does not outweigh quality teaching and service; value placed on collaborative research; elimination of the probationary period or tailoring it to candidates' circumstances; and providing tenure-track faculty with clear expectations for tenure and promotion (Woods, 2006).

Chronister and Baldwin argued (2011) that department chairs oversee recommendations for promotion and tenure, making their approval vital for faculty candidates. Since senior faculty are more likely to hold important positions within departments, they can act "either as roadblocks for or shepherds of cultural change" in the promotion and tenure process (O'Meara, 2001, p.8). As a part of a larger reward system, the promotion and tenure process reflects institutional values, aspirations, privileges, and power structures. There are many in the higher education community who are unhappy about the state of this process, in that it seems stagnant and not up to date

with current priorities of the university or changes in faculty's values and goals (O'Meara et al., 2015).

### **Service-Learning in the Promotion and Tenure Process**

Clear-cut standards for judging service and community-engaged scholarship are important for the faculty reward system. However, only a handful of universities have well-articulated promotion and tenure policies that can help engaged scholars to be recognized and successful in the promotion and tenure process within the institution, and it takes time and effort to change the institutional culture (Cavallaro, 2016). Although it is possible to obtain promotion and tenure as a community-engaged scholar under inconsistent and minimal recognition and support for engaged scholarship, it is not an easy process (Cavallaro, 2016). Different types of university and college faculty (community colleges, four-year institutions, masters, and doctoral universities) may face different challenges.

According to Larsen et al. (2019), universities stipulate in their official documents and numerous higher education publications what professors must achieve in order to earn tenure and promotion. However, the standards for tenure and promotion - teaching, research, and service - are often not clearly delineated, broadly discussed, or systematically evaluated (Chait, 2002). For faculty who indicated that service-learning helped with their promotion and tenure process, integrating and balancing the three components of teaching, research, and service and also including other traditional forms of the scholarship were all important (Cooper, 2014). Incorporating service-learning into

one's teaching, research, and service comes with its challenges, especially in the promotion and tenure process (Bloomgarden, 2007; O'Meara, 2009).

Integrating "teaching and service, teaching and research, or research and service could reduce work overload, enrich each role, and improve chances for promotion and tenure" (Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007, p. 6). Some faculty contribute tremendously to service roles in the university and teach effectively. However, they tend to be less productive in the area of publication (Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007). A number of faculty fall into this category and have struggled to earn or have been denied tenure and promotion as a result (O'Meara et al., 2015).

In a study by Moore and Ward (2010), community-engaged scholars, including those who utilize service-learning, had the feeling that they were working in marginal forms of scholarship in many ways. Many community-engaged faculty reported that it is difficult to find colleagues who understand what they do using service-learning in their classes. The community-engaged faculty were subject to criticism and the undervaluing of their service-learning-related work by the universities' administrations. Moreover, incidents had been reported in which full professors on the promotion and tenure committees gave the advice to associate professors up for tenure and promotion, suggesting that there was no need to include or engage in service-learning because it would be too much of a distraction from their research. Such instances indicate that research is more valuable in the eyes of some tenure and promotion committees.

The development of a reward system implementing service-learning is an unmistakable sign of administrative support (Furco, 2009, cited in Lewing, 2019). There

is a need for educational institutions to commit to the criteria established by the university for earning tenure and promotion. In the criteria, schools most often include teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and service performance (Shifflett & Patterson, 1995; Woods, 2006).

Banerjee and Hausafus analyzed (2007) nearly 400 faculty across the U.S. and found that 30% of the assistant professors and 41% of the associate professors in the study felt that they had not been rewarded in performance reviews and promotion decisions for focusing on service-learning.

Achieving a balance between teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and service can be a formidable undertaking. As things currently stand, promotion, tenure, and retention are mostly influenced by research and publication – and more so than ever, due to the growing need for faculty to generate external funding for their projects. Promotion and tenure committees will acknowledge university and community service, but for the most part, service is not a prime factor in earning tenure and promotion (Price & Cotton, 2006).

According to Cooper (2014), engaging in service-learning can impact the tenure and promotion process in positive and negative ways. Positive effects of using service-learning as a way of integrating one's teaching, scholarship, and service include bringing visibility to the institution and the engaged faculty member and encouraging faculty to reflect more deeply on their teaching (Cooper, 2014). However, faculty must be aware of the disciplinary constraints and support provided by colleagues, deans, and senior-level administrators (Cooper, 2014).

For faculty who indicated that documenting service-learning helped in their promotion and tenure process, integrating the three components of teaching, research, and service was important; balancing all three and including other traditional forms of scholarship was stressed. Concerning the integration of these three components, several participants emphasized the important balance that must be maintained (Cooper, 2014).

A large quantity of faculty work is reviewed by tenure and promotion committees, and making clear the role that service-learning plays in personnel committees and reward structures is crucial (Jackson & Jackson, 2014). Participating in other forms of traditional scholarship, in addition to service-learning, may also be important for tenure-track faculty. Institutions should review their personnel processes and find ways to recognize that involvement in service-learning can inform a faculty member's teaching, scholarship, and service (Cooper, 2014).

Service-learning can be time-consuming and messy work. However, when provided with the proper support, faculty can effectively incorporate service-learning into their courses and impact student-learning outcomes, students' perceptions of community and social issues, and encourage ongoing, responsible citizenship (Abes et al., 2009; Harwood et al., 2005). Institutionalizing and centralizing service-learning may help make this form of teaching more manageable for faculty (Cooper, 2014).

### **Performance Criteria for Tenure in Some Master's Degree-Granting Universities in the U.S.**

At Middle Tennessee State University, faculty are evaluated in several categories: instruction, research, public service, and cooperation (Middle Tennessee State University,

2020). Candidates for tenure and promotion are expected to demonstrate quality teaching as well as compile evidence for research, service, and cooperation. Most universities have specific criteria and procedures for evaluating tenure files and compiling documentation related to engagement.

Some universities, such as Kansas State University, divide service into two categories: directed and non-directed. Directed service is a term mostly applied to service which faculty are explicitly required to do for their jobs. In other words, service is part of their duties and responsibilities (Kansas State University, 2018). Non-directed service is the opposite of directed service. According to Kansas State University's tenure and promotion practice, non-directed service's "specific expectations are not usually delineated in job descriptions" (p. 4). Non-directed service has three subcategories: non-directed service to the institution, to the profession, and to the public.

According to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the key to promotion among faculty is teaching effectiveness (the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2010). Faculty must demonstrate the ability to assist in student development, curriculum development, as well as perform teaching activities outside the communities of the university. Faculty also compile a scholarship- and knowledge-building section in their tenure and promotion file. This is where faculty collaborate with the local community in order to exercise engagement (the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2010). These are the universities that are similar to MSU, Mankato, in size, student enrollment, and degree-granting programs.

According to MSU, Mankato's educational mission, the university "strives to integrate teaching and research in service to the local, regional, and global communities". Agreeing to this mission, the MSU, Mankato administration follows the Minnesota State collective bargaining agreements with Inter-Faculty Organization's (the IFO's) five criteria for the promotion and tenure process. The criteria are specified in Article 22 of the faculty contract: evidence of ability to teach effectively, evidence of scholarly or creative achievement or research, evidence of continuing preparation and study, evidence of contribution to student growth and development, and service to the university and community (Inter-Faculty Organization, 2021).

According to MSU, Mankato promotion and tenure guidelines, faculty are required to demonstrate these five areas in their promotion and tenure files.

- A. Demonstrated ability to teach effectively or perform effectively in other current assignments
- B. Scholarly or creative achievement or research
- C. Evidence of continuing preparation and study
- D. Contribution to student growth and development
- E. Service to the university and community (Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2019)

Essentially, the university promotion and tenure process require faculty to provide evidence of work in the areas of research, teaching and studying. Service-learning is, on the one hand, a teaching methodology, and on the other hand, it can be included in the service section. At MSU, Mankato, there are five areas evaluated for tenure and



promotion: teaching, research, continuing study and preparation, student growth, and service to the community (Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2019).

After the files are submitted, the chairman, dean, and department assess the files and make recommendations for promotion and tenure. The person who makes the final decision on this is the provost. This is the basic tenure and promotion process; however, there is no research on how and to what degree the university values service-learning in this process, other than the researcher's mock project on this topic for a qualitative research design method class. In that mock project, the researcher interviewed two faculty from two different departments who reported to the same dean. According to those two faculty, who were themselves in the process of seeking promotion and tenure, their dean supports service-learning as much as that dean can. The limitations of the mock project were the small sample size and the fact that both faculty were being assessed by the same dean.

### **Summary**

According to many studies, service-learning is beneficial to everyone involved in the process, including students, schools, faculty, and local communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). Although there are many barriers, engaged faculty try their hardest to utilize the methods prescribed by service-learning as much as they can. One of the barriers for community-engaged faculty who use the service-learning method is its comparatively low value in the institutional reward systems, specifically in the tenure and promotion process. According to O'Meara et al. (2015), community-engaged scholarship must be redefined at the institutional level, which goes hand in hand with identifying

community-engaged scholarship criteria, as they are defined differently within departments. Another primary point in this chapter is the need for concrete criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship, necessitated by the fact that documentation and evidence of community-engaged scholarship are also different across institutions and even within the institutions (Anderson & Trinkle, 2018). Therefore, acceptance of various community-engaged scholarly products is needed in order to provide more opportunities for engaged scholars working in an underutilized scholarship to receive promotion or tenure (O'Meara et al., 2015).

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

A phenomenological approach – a form of qualitative inquiry – was deemed appropriate for this study because the goal of the study was to describe and discover deans' and faculty's lived experiences and how they perceive the value of service-learning in the promotion and tenure process at Minnesota State University Mankato (MSU, Mankato). In general, a qualitative method centers on the discovery of personal accounts relating to the phenomenon in question and interpreting their meaning via qualitative data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Using a qualitative approach provides meaning and specific order of events to data extracted from participants' first-hand accounts (Miles et al., 2014). Moreover, qualitative data are usually collected in a specific context and situation, which gives the data more credibility (Miles et al., 2014). Qualitative data is holistic and rich (Miles et al., 2014). According to Miles et al. (2014), qualitative data goes well beyond a sustained period and gleans a richer depth of insight than shallow questions such as *what* and *how many*. For these reasons, the researcher chose to employ qualitative data analysis, specifically the phenomenological method, in this study.

#### Characteristics of a Phenomenological Study Method

The phenomenological study seeks to reveal the lived experiences of individuals who share a common concept or phenomenon with the goal of developing a description of the experience (Creswell, 2014). A phenomenological study is an approach to researching how individuals experience a phenomenon and their relationship to it.

According to Husserl (1970), it is not the individuals but how the phenomenon appears among them that defines a phenomenological study. There are some critical steps in this type of study. The first step of phenomenological data collection is bracketing. According to Moustakas (1994), bracketing is an effort made by the researcher to “refrain from judgment, to abstain from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). Creswell (2014) added that the values, experiences, and backgrounds of researchers could influence the interpretation of the data. In other words, before data collection, the researcher must remove themselves from their personal experience with the phenomenon in order to become as bias-free as possible.

Secondly, data are usually collected via interviews, and the analysis starts with identifying and reducing the relevant information into smaller statements. In this stage, the researcher prepares textual and structural descriptions of the data. The textual description describes the “what” of the experience, and the structural describes the “how” of the experience. After the interviews are collected and data gleaned, the researcher identifies the meanings and themes of the data, which define the essence of the study participants’ lived experiences. These two together form the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Rationale**

Phenomenology was the most appropriate method for this study because it facilitates objectivity, reliability, and trustworthiness in the data analysis. The study’s main goal was to explore the perceptions of deans’ and faculty’s lived experiences and how they value service-learning in the promotion and tenure process at MSU, Mankato.

The practices of the tenure and promotion process can be subject to bias and are not easily measured. A phenomenological study provided the opportunity to gather data from the faculty closely associated with the phenomenon at MSU, Mankato. The method encourages objectivity and bias-free analysis due to its processes, such as bracketing. Creswell (2014) elucidated that the phenomenological approach helps empower and share individuals' voiced stories. The researcher chose this method to spotlight the largely unexamined study topic of service-learning.

### **Participants**

This research targeted community-engaged faculty members and deans of colleges willing to give their opinions and perceptions on the value of service-learning in the promotion and tenure process. The researcher chose to recruit full-time tenure track faculty who often utilize service-learning in their curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities and college deans experienced in civic engagement and service. Ten participants were interviewed regarding their opinions on the value of service-learning in the tenure and promotion process at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU). The nine faculty were full-time and tenure track faculty who had been using service-learning as a teaching method for a median of seven years. The faculty taught in education (5), social sciences (2), health (1), and engineering departments (1). About sixty percent of the faculty already had gone through the tenure and promotion process, and the rest were planning to go through it in the coming semester or two. The study was also interested in whether or not the deans support engaged faculty who file service-learning-related dossiers in the promotion and tenure process. The researcher reached out to several deans

who work with community-engaged faculty at MSU, Mankato. Two deans responded to the researcher's invitation to the semi-structured interview, and only one dean – who had vast experience with service-learning and community-engaged scholars – participated in the interview. It is worth noting that out of several deans to whom the researcher reached out, a few of them were interim deans, and others were not familiar with or very experienced in working with community-engaged faculty. For these reasons, only one dean was adequately qualified and available to participate in this study.

The participant selection process was done using purposeful sampling. This method is used to identify and select individuals who have knowledge and experience with certain topics (Palinkas et al., 2016). The faculty were selected based on specific criteria. The first step was identifying community-engaged faculty who utilize service-learning in their classes. The Community Engagement office of the university, which keeps track of community-engaged faculty, assisted with this identification process. The researcher had emails sent to the faculty and deans, inviting them to the interview. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, and the recordings of all interviews were stored safely in Zoom and MediaSpace (electronic storage) for further data analysis.

In order to obtain in-depth information on the subject, there must be a fair amount of participation from faculty and deans. According to Boyd (2001) and Creswell (2014), two to ten participants are sufficient in a phenomenological study. The researcher interviewed nine engaged faculty from four different departments, so there are sufficient faculty for the criteria. The researcher interviewed one dean from one of the faculty's departments which was not sufficient for the full phenomenological study.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study was that only a handful of departments use service-learning as a teaching method at MSU, Mankato, so the faculty participants were not very diverse in regards to their departments and subjects taught. Moreover, generalizing the results of this study to universities beyond public, midsize, Midwestern universities is not very feasible due to the uniqueness of each school and situation. As service-learning is not a popular method and not many faculty use it in their classes, few faculty were able to participate in this study. A small sample size, however, is common in qualitative research studies.

### **Data Collection**

Phenomenological research focuses on gleaning rich information from participants who are very familiar with the subject matter (Moustakas, 1994). The primary method of data collection is semi-structured interviews. In this study, the researcher interviewed participants via Zoom, which is an app that conveniently allows the storage and transcription of the interviews in the secured cloud. Semi-structured interviews also allow a detailed and descriptive account of participants' lived experiences. Interview questions were open-ended, which enabled participants to provide more in-depth information relating to their experience on the subject matter. All subjects were informed that their participation was voluntary. The interviews were mutually agreed upon with consent forms, and anonymity was kept.

## **Instrumentation**

For phenomenological research, the data often consists of a collection of semi-structured interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The semi-structured interview provides a focus on the phenomenon while leaving open space for the emerging threads. A semi-structured interview is a flexible data collection method that is easy to utilize and not only enables reciprocity between interviewer and participants but also allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions (Galletta & Cross, 2013). Even though the semi-structured interview is considered a basic method, it allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the participants' experiences and opinions on the topic (Gill et al., 2008). In this study, the researcher interviewed nine faculty and one dean from four departments via zoom for 20-35 minutes each. The researcher interviewed each participant only once. The one-on-one interviews ensured that each participant had a unique, confidential opportunity to share their experiences with the researcher. The interview questions were developed based on interview criteria established by Moustakas (1996) and were designed to capture the textual and structural components of the phenomenon. In addition, the researcher included demographic questions in order to gather more information on the participants. In general, participants' experiences deny or confirm the existence of the phenomenon and are considered a textual component. On the other hand, identification of the context and situation is considered a structural component of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1996). These two components can shape the essence of the phenomenon.



## Interview Questions for Faculty

### Demographic Questions:

1. What subject do you teach at MSU, Mankato?
2. What department do you teach in?
3. How many years have you been teaching here at MSU, Mankato?

### Structural Questions:

4. Are you familiar with the service-learning component?
5. How many years have you been using service-learning?
6. What are the barriers and logistical issues for faculty at the university in incorporating and implementing service-learning in their classes?
7. What kind of support do you receive from your supervisors and school administrators?

### Textual Questions:

8. Have you gone through the promotion and tenure process yet?
9. If so, did you include service-learning-related documents in your tenure file?

Follow-up questions: What did you include (what kind of dossiers did you use)? If you didn't, what were the reasons not to include service-learning-related dossiers?

10. If you were/are successful in receiving promotion or tenure, do you believe that those dossiers you provided relating to service-learning had/will have a positive influence on that decision?

11. Is the scholarship of engagement recognized and valued as much as other, more traditional forms of scholarship (teaching, research, and publication) in your department? Follow-up questions: If so, what are the reasons your department values scholarship of engagement, and to what extent? How does your department value service-learning in the promotion and tenure process?
12. Do you think the university administration, in general, values service-learning in the promotion and tenure process?

### **Interview Questions for Deans**

#### Demographic Questions:

1. What department do you work in as an administrator?
2. What's your job title?
3. How many years have you been working as a dean/administrator?

#### Structural Questions:

4. Are you familiar with service-learning as a teaching component?
5. Do you encourage your department faculty to utilize service-learning?  
If so, how do you encourage them? If not, why not?
6. Is service-learning part of your department's professional development?
7. Is service-learning part of personnel decisions such as hiring and annual review, etc.?

#### Textual Questions:

8. Do you think a community-engaged scholarship is a legitimate scholarship?

9. Do you think engaged scholarship is as worthy of being invested in as other traditional forms of scholarship (research, teaching, service)?
10. Do you think your faculty members file service-learning-related dossiers in their tenure and promotion files? If so, why? If not, why not? Do you encourage them to file service-learning-related dossiers? If so, how do you encourage them?
11. How do you evaluate service-learning-related dossiers?
12. Do you personally value service-learning dossiers as much as other traditional scholarship dossiers?
13. Do you think the university administration, in general, highly values service-learning in the promotion and tenure process?

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher worked as a graduate assistant at the Center for Civic Engagement at another state university in the Midwest. While working as a graduate assistant, the researcher worked with faculty and instructors who utilized service-learning and was thus inspired to research this subject matter. The researcher aimed for as much objectivity as possible through bracketing or attempting to eliminate any personal bias. This was achieved by double-checking codes, categories, and themes and by making the interview transcripts available to participants.

### **Data Analysis**

After the interviews were stored in the cloud, the researcher categorized and organized the raw closed-captioning text, then transcribed the interviews using closed captions on the Zoom app and checked for mistakes in the closed captions, ensuring that

the transcripts were all correct. The next step was to look for initial codes and themes, comparing the faculty and dean's answers using open, axial, and selective coding.

### **Open Coding**

Open coding is the “process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 61). In order to decode the transcripts and texts, one needs to expose their meaning and analyze the textual content, which is why this step is called open coding (Khandkar, 2014). In the open coding phase, there are three things that will happen: labeling phenomena, discovering categories, and developing categories. Qualitative data can be broken down into pieces, and they should be labeled appropriately. These labels are called “codes.” This is giving discrete names to the elements which capture their essence.

Next, researchers group the codes into categories based on their common properties. Codes are classified and compared with others. This is an inductive research method where data reduction can occur. In open coding, properties and dimensions of codes and concepts are important; they help develop broader relationships later. Open coding is usually the first phase of qualitative data analysis; in the later phases, coding helps to establish patterns (Khandkar, 2014).

### **Axial and Selective Coding**

Axial coding is the second step of the qualitative method. In this phase, researchers make connections between codes and develop categories for intersecting codes around the core phenomenon. Axial coding helps to identify and make connections between concepts and categories (Hoddy, 2018). In other words, data is assembled in new

ways after open coding to make connections between categories. The concepts and categories come from the data based on their properties (Coskun et al., 2017).

The third phase of the theory is selective coding, in which categories are integrated, structured, and saturated to determine if any new properties, dimensions, or variations emerge during the coding process (Hoddy, 2018). This is a process of selecting core categories that will be analyzed. In this process, central themes and categories of the phenomenon emerge. The main job of the researcher in this step is to find a storyline that relates to other categories and validates them (Hoddy, 2018). Each transcription is analyzed multiple times, and the whole coding process is drawn from participants' phrases in the transcriptions. Open, axial, and selective coding help form summative categories and themes.

### **Trustworthiness, Authenticity, and Validity**

The internal validity of any research hinges on its findings being accurate and truthful. Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that the accuracy of the findings of qualitative research determines the validity and reliability of any research. The researcher bracketed himself during the interviews and their analyses, which ensured the study's trustworthiness, authenticity, and validity using verified data collection. Also, authenticity was confirmed by using direct quotes from the participants. Recording the interviews increased the likelihood that the faculty's and dean's experiences on the subject were accurately communicated. The transcripts were made available to the faculty and dean, who gave interviews to increase the validity of the data. The themes and codes were made available to the participants to make sure that the categorization and themes

were correct and free from potential researcher bias. Themes were available to be edited, if necessary, had participants requested to adjust their interpretation of them.

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings

This qualitative research study investigated how Minnesota State University, Mankato, values service-learning in the promotion and tenure process. The ten participants were interviewed from MSU, Mankato, to discuss their perspectives on this issue. Of those ten, nine were faculty who shared their experiences with using service-learning as a teaching method.

This chapter covers 16 themes identified in the semi-structured interviews with community-engaged faculty, and an additional four themes from the dean's interview. The first group of six themes is under the category of community-engaged faculty's barriers and logistical issues in implementing service-learning at MSU, Mankato. Those themes include finding community partners, lack of better service-learning coordination from the university, adoption of service-learning, too much faculty work in the implementation of service-learning, running background checks, and not enough support from the university administration. The next group of themes are related to the facts that service-learning is not recognized and valued as a scholarship, and is not valued as much as other traditional forms of scholarship. The next group of themes is about the value of service-learning in the promotion and tenure process. The themes include: service-learning is not recognized and valued in the departments, service-learning is valued to a certain degree, a few deans acknowledge the importance of service-learning, faculty's belief that service-learning dossiers would benefit them in the tenure and promotion process, the inclusion of service-learning dossiers in promotion and tenure files, the

university administration does not oppose service-learning, and the university president and provosts' assessment is less valued than the deans' and departments'. Lastly, there are four themes from the dean's interview: the dean encourages service-learning informally, the dean sees service-learning as legitimate scholarship, the dean encourages faculty to file service-learning dossiers, and evaluation of criteria and evidence in the tenure and promotion process.

Thematic analysis will be discussed in chapter V. What follows is an exploration of themes in more detail and qualitative evidence obtained from the interviews.

### **Barriers and Logistical Issues in Implementing Service-Learning**

Participants distinguished different types of barriers they encountered while attempting to implement quality service-learning. The faculty faced many barriers and logistical issues, such as finding community partners, lacking support from the university, having too much on their plates to carry out service-learning effectively, and liability issues.

#### **Finding Community Partners**

Two of the faculty participants mentioned that one of the main barriers to service-learning is the struggle to even find service-learning opportunities for students. The majority of the faculty said that they themselves, rather than the university, find community partners. The faculty match students with community organizations and track their service hours.

- “I think finding the community partner is one of the main barriers.”
- “Access within the community is a barrier as well.”



- “It’s not school administration [that assists faculty in finding community partners]. I’ll say that. But it is probably a combination of previous connections or connections that were previously made by faculty before.”
- “The dean’s office . . . supervises an office of the field experience, so that office is supposed to do some of the details of this administration for me. But I actually do the match [between students and community partners].”
- “I built a partnership with the community organization. I match the students where they’re going. I orient organizations into what I expect out of the service-learning. I keep track of service-learning hours.”

#### **Lack of Better Service-Learning Coordination from the University**

Two faculty participants indicated that they would like a coordination office to help them set up service-learning programs. An office could process service-learning-related documents and allow faculty to work less on logistical issues. The faculty mentioned that the university lacks a strong connection and structural framework for service-learning projects, causing the faculty to do extra work to pick up the slack.

- “I talk to universities that are like a fifth our size, right? And they’ll have an entire office fully staffed with like two to five people who do this. Not much support from the university in terms of implementing service-learning is a barrier.”
- “It would be nice if there was like an office that just set up various service-learning opportunities that professors who maybe didn’t want to structure their whole class around service-learning can still access good service-learning experiences.”

- “Because our university doesn’t have a really strong network of people working full-time to set up these sorts of experiences, those sorts of experiences do happen, and then it's just exceptionally time-consuming as a professor, and we have a really high teaching load considering we're expected to do research.”
- “I don’t know that we necessarily have this solid framework for service-based learning design that comes from above me [from the administrative side].”

### **Adoption of Service-Learning**

The participants discussed the adoption and incorporation of service-learning in their classes. Two faculty participants said that they inherited service-learning classes that already existed. One participant mentioned that the service-learning method was adopted because of a curriculum change in their department, although the specific details of the curriculum change were not described in the interview.

- “I kind of inherited a structure that had the service-learning component built into it.”
- “I think part of that became . . . it became clear that having service-learning opportunities for students [were] due to curriculum changes.”

### **Too Much Work in the Implementation of Service-Learning**

Four out of the nine participants believe that implementing service-learning in their classes is a lot of work. A few faculty mentioned a heavy teaching load as one of the main obstacles preventing them from spending more time and energy on a program that could bring meaningful service-learning experiences to students. They were concerned

that preparation for the service-learning program takes time, including the ongoing process of learning how to set up better service projects.

- “It’s a lot of work for faculty members. It takes time and energy. In order to [be] able to have students’ meaningful service-learning, it takes the relationship between faculty members and the agency where the students are doing their work.”
- “I want to set up something that will help them, and they say, ‘So often, professors just assign service-learning, don’t direct their students, and we get 100 calls at the end of the semester: we can’t rely on - you know, that’s not reliable.’ And then we have to create work, so that’s another barrier. Faculty has too much on their plate.”
- “It’s [service-learning] a competency that you have to be motivated to learn on your own, and there are resources like Campus Compacts, but you need to take extra time when you have to learn about them, and then you have to make time to go to them.”
- “It’s more about incorporating [the service-learning elements] as a learning experience into the class, and so taking the time as a faculty member to try to make a transformative experience is challenging.”
- “Another barrier is it just takes you so much more time to set up these classes because you can’t just always run the same class. Service-learning opportunities change, community needs change. And you need to do work before the semester

if they're going to be well-done, to set them up, and then you need to do extra work in the class like you have to teach a topic at the same time you teach.”

- “You need to do more work in the class prep.”
- “The logistics or barriers, logistics about how to find time and, and to get the approval of MSU to have that site as a service-learning.”

### **Running Background Checks**

Three faculty believe that running background checks on their students is a barrier. Representing the university out in the community can bring liability issues. Students need to do their service-learning projects in a safe community and work environment.

- “There is some liability that we have and that the agency has about having students out there. So, making sure that is a safe place that our students have . . . how can I say it . . . like good background or safe background to be able to go out in the community as a representative of MSU.”
- “I think one of the barriers could be, could possibly be if you're around students . . . be around children and youth, you have to have a background check. Those things are required. And so, I mean that's [one of the barriers] . . . they're not insurmountable.”
- “We need to do background checks. It's supposed to be like a field experience connected to student teaching. And that means that . . . the field experience office should . . . at least know about if not actually approve, the location where students go in. And then, I'm as a professor; I need to do some paperwork where I give

them - I give the field experience office the list of students for each field location.”

### **Need for Meaningful Service-Learning**

Three participants mentioned that finding and creating intentional and transformative service-learning experiences for the students is one of the top priorities in doing service. They also noted the difficulty in finding meaningful service-learning projects semester after semester.

- “There’s just a lot more planning and a lot more intentionality, and it changes from semester to semester unless you get really lucky and find a project or an experience you can keep doing.”
- “A barrier is figuring out, again, the meaningful part of service-learning. It’s not just volunteering; it’s not sending students out in the community and saying, ‘Do the work.’ It’s more about incorporating that as a learning experience into the class, and so taking the time as a faculty member, trying to make a transformative experience is challenging.”
- “I think the next significant element of this is the students need to see the value [of their service-learning projects].”

### **Not Enough Support from The University Administration**

The majority of the faculty mentioned that there is not much support from their department, even though one of their deans acknowledged in an interview that service-learning is important (see page 71 for a summary of themes from the dean’s interview). There is a great burden on faculty to know where to look and how to find the necessary

means by which to facilitate their service-learning projects. The faculty indicated that this is a specific skill that not everyone is automatically equipped with. When asked to describe the support they receive from their department, comments included:

- “No support. I need to find the correct people to make something happen. It’s like finding a needle in a haystack.”
- “Don’t receive support unilaterally from our department.”
- “I think the dean’s office would be supportive of funding needs, but I’m one of a ton of faculty which needs support, so I guess none is the correct answer.”
- “Not much support from the school administration.”
- “There’s no immediate support; I have to seek it out.”
- “I need to consult with somebody . . . [but I need to find someone] very specific to consult with.”

### **Service-learning Is Not Recognized and Valued as a Scholarship**

Five faculty stated that service-learning as a teaching method is not valued among the university departments as a form of scholarship. One faculty indicated that their colleagues find service-learning to be less empirical compared to other, traditional forms of scholarship and that their colleagues do not see value in service-learning. Another faculty was told that service-learning was too difficult to implement as a teaching method and that they should go back to a more traditional way of teaching. One faculty reported that the culture of higher education discourages non-tenured faculty, especially females or those of color, from breaking out of traditional forms of scholarship, while another

faculty cited “professional jealousy” as a reason for being discouraged from service-learning.

- “It’s [service-learning] gotten so challenging, it’s cumbersome to figure out how do I get through this. And I’ve been told, ‘maybe you should just go back to the traditional way of lecture-style.’”
- “[The value of service-learning is] not recognized, the department is steeped in ancient ways of viewing work at the collegial level.”
- “One of my colleagues thought that was a great idea to really get the kids out into the community so that they are providing services to kids who don’t get services. And another colleague of mine, I think he sees the benefit of it but does not want to go through any of the administrative work sides of things to do that, so basically said, ‘No, just, I don’t know, that’s not something that we’re going to do.’”
- “My work [a service-learning project] was not received well by my colleagues.”
- “When I first started doing service-learning, I think I didn’t talk about it a lot. Because I understood that not everybody supported it.”
- “I think because not very many people are doing it, we don’t really talk about it as much.”
- “It’s not valued and recognized in my department.”
- “Then, there’s a culture in higher education, where when you’re not tenured, and your older tenured faculty tell you not to do something, you’re expected to not do it, especially within kind of the colonized Western white dominant culture that’s

in higher education, being a young female of color, you're not encouraged to stand up for yourself."

- "I just need people to get out of my way. So, I think that some of my colleagues who are also passionate about advocacy and social justice will be happy to see those things, and the others who aren't won't be [excited about service-learning]."
- "Some faculty don't support it because they can be professionally jealous. Using service-learning is a creative way to facilitate relationships between community matters, I don't know."

### **Service-Learning Is Not Valued as Much as Other Traditional Forms of Scholarship**

Two participants stated that service-learning is valued within the university but that it's not valued as much as other forms of scholarship such as publication, research, and teaching. They indicated that these more traditional forms of scholarship are talked about more within the department. One participant said that there is a general attitude that the nature of service is less empirical than other forms of scholarship. Another participant suggested that older faculty in their department are not in favor of service-based and hands-on learning and teaching, which requires emotional intelligence and energy.

- "In certain degrees, yes, but teaching and research are valued higher than service-learning. And those two are talked about the most."
- "I don't think it's valued, with the same degree of . . . to the same degree that other scholarship is . . . There is an attitude of suggesting that those data are more anecdotal and less empirical in nature. I don't agree with that assessment, but I do



think that the popular narrative is that the scholarship associated with this tends to be more of case studies and less conventional, empirical value.”

- “I don’t think that it’s probably helped to the level of I would say our criterion to scholarship, which is usually thought of more broadly in terms of, you know, publications and conference presentations.”
- “We get some pretty crazy stuff sometimes, to be honest, and I’ve likewise been told, well . . . maybe you don’t do that anymore, maybe you just go back to the traditional way. So, I guess to summarize, our older faculty who were not trained under a mindset of action, service-based, hands-on learning are the ones who I think favor more of that traditional approach. Because it is comfortable for them, it’s routine, and it doesn’t require a lot of emotional energy or intelligence; the younger faculty or the newer faculty, who we’ve come through a similar training model for hands-on service-learning, see the value in it and encourage it”.

### **Community-Engaged Faculty Still Need to Work on Traditional Scholarship**

Two faculty said that they are required to publish and engage in other types of traditional forms of scholarship in addition to service-related work.

- “I make sure that I’m regularly publishing in a traditional format – on top of everything else that I do.”
- “I have to write and publish. I cannot spend too much time on doing service.”

### **Value of Service-Learning in the Promotion and Tenure Process**

The following themes concern whether or not the university administration, especially individual departments, values service-learning.

### **Departments Do Not Value or Recognize Service-Learning**

Five out of the nine faculty highlighted that their work in service-learning does not get acknowledged and valued to the degree they would like. One faculty said that much of their work in service-learning has not been paid, and another faculty commented that their work within the community is not understood and is even dismissed by their department. One participant noted that while no one was opposed to their work in service-learning, there was also no actual support given.

- “It hasn’t been supported. I feel like sometimes I don’t get it. It doesn’t get acknowledged.”
- “It has not always been recognized that the work, the level of work that I do for students is true impactful research, and it takes time, both from my teaching and from my research life.”
- “So, for me, I don’t think, I don’t think it’s been recognized to the degree it should be recognized – for hitting all the goals I have, but at the same time, I don’t have anyone ever saying, ‘Don’t do that.’ I have them saying, ‘That’s really great that our students are getting this experience.’ No support in terms of like, you know, paying me for extra duties or anything.”
- “I’m not sure if it’s because it’s service, and that’s not valued, or if it’s because it’s with students, and I think people who haven’t done service-learning and haven’t worked with students with community partners don’t really understand what high levels students rise to and how competent their work can be, and so I think it gets dismissed.”

### **Service-Learning Is Valued to a Certain Degree**

Two participants mentioned that service-learning is valued because of its engagement piece, but not to the extent of other, more traditional forms of scholarship. They indicated that the university values service-learning for its community service-related aspects.

- “I would say that, you know, the aspect of community service learning is valued. But maybe again, not to the extent of other criteria. But – and also, I would say – not to the extent of probably, you know . . . in the classroom, more traditional type of education.”
- “Service-learning – as opposed to working with industry clients – then I think it would be equally valued to the industry client aspects [if service-learning were industry-focused].”
- “I do think our program values the engagement of faculty with students.”
- “I would say to varying degrees. I think. It just depends upon who’s in that office, you know? I’ve had some really excellent support from some of the administration that...the interim provost has been super supportive of community service learning and has actually visited some of the sites where we did a summer community service-learning-type process project. And so, yes, I think, to varying degrees.”

One participant believed that service-learning is valued in their department. They believe this is because of its nature of high engagement with the local community.

- “It’s incredibly valued. So, working in our field tends to be high energy high engagement. Significant amounts of effective communication are required to be successful as a professional, and so while students are here as undergraduates, it’s expected that we help facilitate opportunities for them out in the community.”

### **Deans’ Acknowledgement of the Importance of Service-Learning**

According to participant responses, there appear to be a few deans and a chairperson who do value service-learning, although they don’t have much control over the extent of that support provided to faculty. One faculty stated that their service-learning work is indirectly rewarded by the institution.

- “My dean is supportive, but there is something they don’t have control over.”
- “Dean acknowledges service-learning is necessary.”
- “Supportive typically in concept to service-learning, I think that this is an institution that recognizes the value of that sort of learning and has found subtle ways to incentivize doing so.”
- “I guess the kind of support that I could mention is probably just from other faculty and probably from our Chair who sees this as valuable, but it’s really left up to the individual faculty to do everything around service-learning.”

### **The Benefit of Service-Learning-related Dossiers in the Tenure and Promotion Process**

Eight out of nine faculty believe that service-learning-related dossiers included in the tenure and promotion files had and will continue to have a positive impact on their promotion. One faculty believes that the university sees value in service-learning because

it demonstrates engagement. Another faculty said that service-learning develops a relationship not only with students but also with the community. When asked if their experience with service-learning had a positive influence on their tenure and promotion process, faculty responded:

- “I want to believe that they see the value in service-based learning, especially with the way that our culture and society is evolving the needs for social justice and advocacy.”
- “I think so because I think that it demonstrates engagement and expanded ways with your students and facilitating their learning in, I think, creative ways.”
- “Very much so. You know, there’s a lot of, obviously, there’s a lot of factors that go into tenure and promotion at MSU. Teaching is very high on that list, and to engage in service-learning, and experiential learning means that you’re not just – as an instructor, you’re not just developing relationships with students, you’re developing relationships with members of the community and with agencies in that community.”
- “In my experience, that was an important part of how I was evaluated for tenure and promotion because it appeared to me at least that my superiors recognize the effort that’s required to engage in meaningful service learning, and more than that, the effort required to make sure that it’s successful because it’s not just a matter of engaging, it’s a matter of engaging in a way that’s effective that, you know, that leads to positive popular media coverage, for example, and that leads

to students getting placed in paid positions once they depart from this institution.

So, we know there's tangible evidence."

### **Inclusion of Service-Learning Dossiers in Promotion and Tenure Files**

Five out of eight faculty included service-learning-related documents in their tenure and promotion files, and three out of nine faculty who are currently going through the promotion process said that they would include them. There are two types of dossiers the faculty included and want to include in their files.

### **Dossiers Collected from Students**

Five faculty said that they mostly provide documentation and evidence collected from students. These documents include student reflections, photographs and videos, evidence of work by students, actual assignments submitted by students, and faculty's informal evaluations for students' assignments.

- "[I included] students' reflections that were related to service-learning, written narratives, photographs and videos, evidence of work by students."
- "[I included] flyers, photos, and evidence of work completed by my students."
- "And so maybe I will include some of their [students'] actual assignments."
- "I also do my own informal evaluations because the university evaluations don't give [students] a ton of opportunities to really expand on their experiences, so I do my own for a few courses, and I'll include those reflections too . . ."
- "I'm going to include it, my student reflections."

### **Faculty's Own Written Narratives**

Four faculty mentioned that they included their own narratives as service-learning dossiers. These narratives include professional development plans and reviews, faculty's assignment descriptions, and written assignments related to service-learning opportunities.

- “I’ve included those elements in my professional development plans and reviews. I’ve received positive marks because I’ve engaged in service and experiential learning.”
- “I’m going to include my assignment descriptions.”
- “I included all of that, in terms of my tenure and promotion materials, I made sure to go through the written narrative as well as [other materials].”
- “I actually included the written assignments that were related to those service-learning opportunities. So, I, you know, I described the opportunities in my narrative.”

One faculty said that they did not include service-learning-related dossiers. The reason was related to oversight. The faculty did not know that service-learning-related dossiers were considered to be a part of instruction, and nobody suggested that they include it.

- “I think it was a pure oversight. Perhaps on my part. I did not really think about it as an additional service, or it was just part of the instruction. But then, on the other hand, nobody asked me about that either, right? So, I guess it was an oversight for both sides. My department did not know either.”

One faculty stated that service-learning-related dossiers don't yield tenure and promotion unless faculty provide strong evidence that it included a traditional form of scholarship. Because of this, the faculty did not include smaller community-engaged projects in their promotion files.

- “Yes, but it wouldn't have mattered otherwise ... I certainly didn't highlight, ‘I worked 80 hours a week, every week, while we did this, these projects,’ and I didn't highlight my smaller community engagement at all.”

#### **Faculty Assumptions About University Administration Support of Service-Learning in Promotion and Tenure**

A couple of participants mentioned that they do not know whether the university administration supports service-learning in the promotion and tenure process. However, they agree that the administration does support service-learning in general if executed effectively. One presumed reason for this is that it bolsters the university's image in the community.

- “I don't know the answer for promotion and tenure. I have an opinion that they value service learning because it makes the university look good that the students are out there in the community.”
- “I definitely don't think they are opposed to it. I think, at a high level, they appreciate it, and it is valued. Um, I think it probably has more worth if it's done effectively.”
- “Like, if I asked the president, ‘Do you value service-based learning?’ I can't imagine why he'd say no.”



### **The University President and Provosts' Assessment Are Less Valued**

A couple of participants stated that the president's and provost's opinions are not as influential as the departments' in the promotion and tenure process. One participant stressed that while the president and provosts are influenced heavily by the deans, the deans are usually very receptive to the departments' opinions.

- “It really doesn't matter if deans, provost, and/or the president values this work if it is not valued by the department that is assessing you.”
- “What I will say is that it does. Deans on this campus have a lot of power; for the most part, the president and provost will listen to what the dean said, and I think the deans generally listen to what departments and programs say.”

### **The Dean's Perspective on Service-Learning in the Tenure and Promotion Process**

The student researcher interviewed a dean on the value of service-learning in the promotion and tenure process. Here are several themes drawn from the dean's interview: the dean encourages service-learning informally, the dean sees service-learning as legitimate scholarship, the dean encourages faculty to file service-learning-related dossiers and the dean's view on evaluation and criteria and evidence in the tenure and promotion process.

The dean said that they try to encourage service-learning in various capacities.

- “I was first introduced to [service-learning prior to this position], and then during my time at Minnesota State Mankato, the university at different times really tried to promote and encourage service-learning in various capacities.”

### **The Dean Encourages Service-Learning Informally**

The dean informally encourages faculty to participate in service-learning, although the implementation of service-learning is not a requirement.

- “I probably do informally. I really have not made a formal push. I do think programs and different faculty have determined service-learning as a value and have figured out what and where they can place it in their courses or in the program.”
- “But if you look across the college, I don’t know, it’d be, we’d have to do some digging. It’s not a formal component.”
- “Anyway, [faculty have] posted regularly and try to encourage in a one-on-one for students to do service-learning in the community, so probably more of an informal encouragement versus a requirement.”
- “I don’t think we do that [encourage service-learning]. [It’s] informally encouraged, and it’s – I think it’s part of our profession as educators, it’s kind of a natural component, but I do not recall like any specific position descriptions, or an expectation stated specifically around service-learning.”

Every year, un-tenured faculty are required to submit a professional development plan which includes evidence of all the work they’ve done throughout the year. For tenured faculty, this occurs every two years. This is the time that the dean has more in-depth conversations with faculty about service-learning dossiers if they do file them. These plans are assessed based on five criteria set by the Inter-Faculty Organization (see Chapter V for further details on these criteria).

- “What happens is each year [until they’re tenured], they submit a professional development plan, and then at the end, they do the report with evidence. And they get feedback from their department and from the dean, so that is kind of a formal opportunity for me, that’s where I would mostly see and have conversations with faculty about the service-learning that they’re doing”.
- “Then after tenure, they do it every two years, but the whole time a faculty person is employed with us, they have a plan, and then they have to give updates and reports around those five criteria.”

### **The Dean Sees Service-Learning as Legitimate Scholarship**

The dean interviewed indicated that they consider service-learning to be a legitimate form of scholarship, especially if it is documented properly. The dean noted that in many professions, investing in people and the community is a priority, so service-learning should not only be accepted as a legitimate form of scholarship but encouraged.

- “I’d say yes . . . and I have witnessed faculty who have gathered relevant data and documentation and produced scholarship around that component of service-learning in relation to their profession and in that community.”
- “Absolutely, I do think colleges of [certain disciplines], our mindset about scholarly work, especially in relation to service, [is that] in teaching, [service-learning] is very acceptable and encouraged. I think that’s who we are, we’re very much a profession invested in people and . . . in the communities.”

### **The Dean Encourages Faculty to File Service-learning Dossiers**

Not only does the dean encourage service-learning, but they informally encourage faculty to file service-learning dossiers with whatever criterion could qualify as evidence. The dean also supports faculty who do this.

- “I preach them to apply, absolutely if they had put that in, they would have been getting feedback from me, affirming that that’s a relevant pursuit, and documentation and then whatever criterion area they have, so I would say yes, not intentionally again and I haven’t done it collectively or in a formal manner, but in one-on-one see if a faculty person has pursued service-learning and use that as evidence. I’ve been, I’ve supported that. And I do encourage them.”

### **Evaluation of Criteria and Evidence in Tenure and Promotion Process**

The evidence of the faculty which relates to service-learning evaluated by the dean comes in many different forms. The evidence could be anything that demonstrates a learning outcome, such as a record of the faculty’s attendance at training, reflections on faculty’s experience with service-learning, or samples of student work. The dean acknowledged that this evidence could be applied to various criteria.

- “The one thing I like about our professional development process [is that] when they submit their report and even when they do their tenure promotion applications, they have to have evidence.”
- “So, a lot of the evidence might be if they did scholarly work, they’ll have manuscripts or presentations documentation, such as that. If it’s their own professional growth, they’ll have documented attendance at training or

engagement and reflections that show the impact they've had. So, to me the evidence comes in many different forms, depending on what their approach has been around service-learning.”

- “[Evidence also includes] who had been impacted if they're doing it in their classroom at times, I can see that in their teaching and the Criterion 1, they'll show demonstrated students' samples of their work or what they did with service-learning to demonstrate a learning outcome. So again, and there's evidence in, across all five of those criteria.”

### **Summary of Findings**

In summary, the coding brought forward 16 different themes from the faculty interview data, in addition to input from one dean. Participants' direct statements were categorized into these 16 themes, with each classification reflecting comments from at least two interviews. In this way, the data offers a rich, detailed account of participants' varied experiences and perceptions. Data from the single dean interview, while insufficient for extrapolating themes, offer insights on the perspective of evaluators at MSU, Mankato, in regards to service-learning as it is reflected in the tenure and promotion process.

The next chapter will contextualize some of these themes in the Discussion section. Finally, the themes will be compared against existing literature to identify similarities as well as new opportunities for further investigation.

## CHAPTER V

### Discussion

This qualitative research study was aimed at understanding how the value of service-learning in the promotion and tenure process at MSU, Mankato, is perceived by a number of community-engaged faculty and one of their deans. This chapter includes a discussion on whether Minnesota State University Mankato values service-learning in the promotion and tenure process, according to those community-engaged faculty and dean. The chapter concludes with limitations of the current research and suggestions for future studies.

The following three research questions were used in the design of the study:

- What are the barriers and logistical issues that faculty at a public Midwestern university face in incorporating and implementing service-learning into their classes?
- Is scholarship of engagement recognized and considered equal to other traditional forms of scholarship?
- What is the value of service-learning in promotion and tenure at a midsized, public Midwestern university?

The researcher employed a phenomenological approach that attempted to reveal the lived experiences of individuals who share a common phenomenon and their relationships to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). The phenomenological approach sought to describe individuals' experiences of the phenomenon in two facets: textual and structural. The textual description is about the "what" of the experience, and the structure

is about the “how” (Moustakas, 1994). The interview included textual and structural questions that allowed the researcher to gather information about the general perceived value of service-learning in the promotion and tenure process at MSU, Mankato. The open, axial, and thematic coding processes allowed the themes described in chapter IV to be properly identified from the interview questions. The first seven themes were focused on logistical barriers to implementing service-learning. The next themes highlighted the perceptions that service-learning is not valued as much as other traditional forms of scholarship, service-learning is not valued in the tenure and promotion process at the departmental level, faculty assumptions about the university administration support, and which types of dossiers community-engaged faculty include in their tenure and promotion files.

### **Barriers and Logistical Issues in the Implementation of Service-Learning**

The first research question mainly targeted barriers for faculty in implementing service-learning. Several themes emerged from the study about barriers and logistical issues facing faculty in the implementation and sustainability of the service-learning program.

Many barriers were mentioned, such as finding community partners, lack of better service-learning coordination from the university, too much work for the faculty implementing and preparing service-learning projects, and running background checks. Banerjee and Hausafus stated (2007) that time, logistics, funding, community outcomes, and the reward structure are the main barriers to effectively employing faculty-led service-learning. Participants believe that finding community partners is crucial to

implementing a service-learning program since students need to work in a safe community and work environment, supporting the conclusions of Vernaza et al. (2013) that funding is an issue to implementing and continuing to sustain service-learning projects and that this issue is not unique only to community-engagement scholarship and service-learning.

Faculty indicated that building community partnerships is difficult, and the university does very little to help find partners. The absence of support from the university makes it necessary for faculty to expend extra time and effort on top of their existing workloads to make those connections. Participants stated a desire for a dedicated office and staff to help set up service-learning programs, process-related documents for service-learning activities, and act as a hub to connect faculty with community partners and solve logistical issues. One participant noted that even smaller schools with smaller budgets in Minnesota and elsewhere have full-time employees to help community-engaged faculty. MSU, Mankato does have a community engagement center that employs a coordinator and graduate assistant ([mnsu.edu](http://mnsu.edu)). However, the focus of the community engagement personnel is not service-learning project support. Also, the Center for Excellence, Teaching, and Learning (CETL), which is largely responsible for supporting faculty development via effective teaching practices and professional development, does not offer training options for faculty who are interested in service-learning ([mnsu.edu/cetl](http://mnsu.edu/cetl)).

The Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement lists the main characteristics of successful service-learning institutionalization. Some of the main



requirements of that classification are a service-learning office, dedicated staff, internal funding, faculty training opportunities, and a reward system that enables community-engaged faculty to successfully file service-learning-related dossiers to assist in promotion and tenure (Klentin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkowak, 2013). Table 1.1 illustrates the Carnegie Classification criteria for community-engagement at MSU, Mankato. The answers to whether or not each criterion in the table is met are based on the researcher's interpretation of data from faculty interviews in chapter IV.

**Table 1.1**

*Carnegie Classification Table for Community Engagement at MSU, Mankato*

Criteria	Answers
Internal funding	No
Faculty training opportunities	No
Dedicated staff	No
Dedicated office	No
Reward system that enables community-engaged faculty to successfully file service-learning-related dossiers to assist in promotion and tenure process	No
Community-engaged scholarship as part of its core mission	No

Another benefit of having employees dedicated to facilitating service-learning would be to help run background checks. In order for both students and the local

community to be safe, it is important to run background checks on students and to carefully select community partners. This process can take time and necessitates coordination from the faculty. However, it is a necessary process since representing the university positively in the community is important and can be a liability issue.

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was the goal of faculty wanting service-learning projects to be transformative and meaningful experiences for the students. Facilitating this meaningful experience for students is essential and requires better service-learning project design, as suggested by Teranishi (2007).

Some faculty adopt service-learning due to curriculum changes, while others inherit a service-learning program that already existed from former faculty. Participants spoke about the workload required for the implementation and maintenance of a service-learning program. The faculty's teaching loads are heavy, and preparation of service-learning adds significant time and effort to an already demanding job. Kerns and Shelton (2014) suggested that extra work for the faculty is an obstacle, and it can be labor-intensive, at least at the beginning of the service-learning implementation period, and the participants in this study echoed these sentiments in their responses.

### **Service-Learning Is Not Valued as a Form of Scholarship**

The second question of the study from chapter I asked whether community engagement is seen as a form of scholarship at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The dean who participated in this study reported that they see service-learning and community engagement as legitimate forms of scholarship which offer many benefits and act as investments in people and the local community. The dean mainly stressed that the

legitimacy of service and service-learning as a scholarship depends on whether the faculty properly document their work. Proper documentation means, in this case, that community-engaged faculty need to gather data, produce evidence of scholarship around service-learning, and file them in their promotion and tenure files according to the university's tenure and promotion guidelines.

Scholarship of engagement is a new type of scholarship that values service-learning and other types of community-engaged activities (Boyer, 1990). Also, service-learning as a scholarship is an intersection of research, teaching, and community service; this makes it hard to distinguish from other types of scholarship (Bringle et al., 2006). Since service-learning as a scholarship may not be understood and defined clearly within the university, community-engagement activities, specifically service-learning, are easily absorbed into research, teaching, and service sections.

According to themes that emerged from the faculty interviews, most of the faculty participants reported that service-learning is not valued at the university, especially in their departments. Faculty said that their departments at MSU, Mankato, do not recognize service-learning as a legitimate form of scholarship because the department-level faculty continue to do business in outdated ways. Other participants mentioned that their departments are not supportive of service-learning, and some have even been told to stop doing service-learning and to focus on traditional teaching. Faculty said that their deans don't have much control over the extent of support that they can offer them. Another theme identified from the interviews was that service-learning is seen as not empirical compared to other traditional forms of scholarship. Similarly, community-engaged

scholarship is believed by those who utilize traditional scholarship to lack tangible learning analyses and a means by which to record assessment evidence (Vernaza et al., 2013). Some participants mentioned that in their departments, service-learning was not talked about or discussed and that their service-learning projects were not well received. The faculty suggested that this could be because their colleagues were professionally jealous of them successfully executing more engaging teaching methodologies. Moreover, it was reported that many of the older faculty's general attitudes were not in favor of hands-on learning techniques like service-learning. It was further suggested that because service-learning requires more emotional intelligence and energy, traditional teaching methods may be preferable for those who have been in the field for a longer time. This corresponds with another theme discovered in the interviews, which is that younger faculty are more likely to employ service-learning and see value in it.

Moreover, the power dynamic in the departments impedes younger faculty from successfully engaging in non-traditional forms of scholarship. Some faculty participants suggested that older and tenured faculty hold more power in departments and faculty committees. Not only do they not support or see the value in service-learning, but they can also act as a roadblock for the community-engaged faculty's endeavors in service. Even though a few deans see value in the service-learning method and try to encourage using it informally, departments' opinions on tenure and promotion are stronger than those higher up in the university hierarchy.

One faculty went a step further and stated that since the culture of American higher education is situated within dominant western culture, young faculty, women, and

especially women of color, are not expected to stand up for themselves or to spend time on endeavors that senior faculty think are not worthy pursuits. In the current study, eight out of ten participants were female. According to Gentry and Stokes (2015), female faculty undertake a disproportionate amount of service-learning work compared to their male counterparts. The workload inequity is unfair to white women and even more so to women of color (Misra et al., 2021). Butin stated (2006) that faculty who identify themselves as women and racial minorities face more barriers in utilizing service-learning. This could be attributed to women not receiving due credit for their important work in their departments and the expectations by their colleagues for female faculty to do more emotional work with the students. Female faculty are expected to spend more time on service, teaching, and mentoring than their male counterparts, who generally spend more time on research (Misra et al., 2021). Also, service and mentoring are undervalued in the promotion and tenure process compared to research (Misra et al., 2021). These inequalities lead to job dissatisfaction, lower retention rates, and longer time required for promotion (Misra et al., 2011).

### **Value of Service-Learning in the Promotion and Tenure Process**

The last research question rested on whether faculty and deans at Minnesota State University, Mankato value service-learning in the promotion and tenure process. According to themes and codes that emerged from the interviews, service-learning is valued to a certain degree in some participants' departments. One participant said that service-learning is valued because of its efficacy in connecting the university with industry clients. A couple of faculty mentioned that their deans are supportive of the idea

of service-learning and its benefits, especially the engagement of faculty with their students that it affords. The dean who was interviewed in this study said that they encourage community-engaged faculty to file their service-learning-related documents in their promotion and tenure files. This participant also tries to accept multiple forms of service-learning-related dossiers, such as the record of faculty attendance at training, faculty's written narratives, and students' work related to service-learning projects as evidence. Moreover, the dean stated that service-learning is necessary and beneficial and that they support and encourage its usage informally.

Another theme that emerged was the need for service-learning to be well-documented and effectively implemented in order for university administration to be supportive of it. One presumed reason that university administrations support such projects is that they bolster the university's image in the local community. For example, one faculty mentioned that effective and meaningful service-learning projects lead to positive media coverage. Another faculty suggested that students often find jobs and paid positions where they did service-learning via service-learning projects, which in turn reflects positively on the university.

According to MSU, Mankato promotion, and tenure guidelines, "to earn promotion, the faculty member must demonstrate a cumulative record of professional performance and high achievement appropriate to the relevant rank and consistent with the goals and objectives of the university" (MSU Mankato tenure forms, 2019). MSU, Mankato deans, chairpersons, and department faculty write recommendations for faculty applying for tenure and promotion (MSU Mankato tenure forms, 2019). Some faculty

participants suggested that regarding the promotion and tenure process, the university president and provosts' opinions are not as important and influential as those of departments and deans. One faculty member mentioned that deans are highly influential in the university hierarchy in terms of promotion and tenure processes. While deans heavily influence decision-making in the promotion and tenure process, the departments heavily influence the deans. Some faculty participants indicated that since most deans and provosts are from hard science backgrounds such as engineering, they are not very informed on the topic of service and community engagement.

The dean who participated in this study reported very positively about their support for faculty service-learning efforts. However, some of the faculty participants who worked with the dean on service-learning reported some differing perspectives concerning the level of support they received from the dean. The dean openly acknowledged that they considered the service-learning support that they provided to be informal. These differing perspectives could reveal a discrepancy between the type of support that the faculty expect from the dean and what the dean believes they are expected to provide.

Regardless of the level at which they support community-engaged faculty, however, the dean is just one person. Institutionalization of an endeavor like community-engagement requires time and effort beyond what a single person can contribute. The work that needs to be done to implement service-learning on a large scale is significant.

### **Service-Learning is Not Valued in the Promotion and Tenure Process**

Most of the faculty participants in this study included service-learning-related dossiers in their promotion and tenure files because they believed that these dossiers would and did positively influence promotion and tenure decision-making from the department, deans, and university administration. At the same time, however, most of the faculty highlighted that service-learning is not acknowledged to the degree that they would like for it to be. Service-learning-related work is not understood and is even dismissed at times in their departments. The extra work that community-engaged faculty are required to do due to the nature of service is neither paid nor supported. Faculty stated that they do not receive unilateral support from their departments in terms of running their service-learning projects. The only faculty who did not file service-learning-related dossiers did not do so because they were unaware that service-learning-related dossiers were allowed to be filed in their tenure and promotion file, and nobody from their department suggested it. Most community-engaged faculty reported that there is no immediate support and no one to consult with regarding service-learning. Participants speculated that the nature of service-learning as service work could be responsible for its dismissal by their peers.

Another theme that was identified in the interviews was the belief that service, specifically service-learning, is not valued as much as other forms of scholarship such as publication, research, and teaching. Community-engaged faculty who utilize service-learning as a teaching method must engage in other types of traditional teaching methods in addition to their service-learning-related work. Participants expressed that they need to



write and publish in traditional formats and not spend too much time exclusively on service-learning projects and their documentation. According to Jordan (2009), a lack of peer review is an issue for community-engaged scholars. He attributes this to the fact that assessing rigor, quality, and impact of community-engaged scholarship is not easy, and reviewers of publications are biased against community-engaged scholars' work. For these reasons, community-engaged faculty may feel that filing only service-learning-related dossiers will not lead to promotion and tenure. Similarly, Kern and Shelton (2014) stated that while service can be one of the elements in the tenure and promotion process, it often ranks below other traditional forms of scholarship. Therefore, faculty need to find ways to engage in traditional scholarship to make their cases for tenure and promotion.

### **Types of Service-Learning Dossiers**

MSU, Mankato, is one of seven four-year universities regulated by the Minnesota State System. The tenure and promotion processes for faculty at all seven campuses are determined by the Inter-Faculty Organization (IFO) contract that is re-negotiated bi-annually (IFO, 2022). The contract articulates five required criteria for faculty professional development and evaluation: ability to teach effectively, evidence of scholarly or creative achievement or research, evidence of continuing preparation and study, evidence of contribution to student growth and development, and service to the university and community. Each year until they are tenured, faculty submit a report to their dean with evidence of their accomplishments in the five criteria. Thereafter, they submit a report every two to four years (IFO 2022, Article 22). To obtain tenure or promotion, faculty submit an expansive narrative application with evidence of their

accomplishments in the five criteria areas. Their applications are evaluated by their departments and dean before obtaining final approval from the Provost and President (IFO 2022, Article 25).

According to themes that emerged from this study, the faculty included two main types of service-learning-related dossiers in their tenure and promotion files. One type consists of dossiers collected from students who participated in service-learning projects. These documents can be student reflections, actual work footage and photos, assignments that the students completed, or faculty's informal evaluations of student projects. Another type of dossier is the faculty's own written narratives. These narratives are faculty's professional development plans and reviews, assignment descriptions, and written assignments that are related to service-learning programs. The dean who participated in this study added that they also accept records of faculty's attendance in training, written reflections from faculty, and samples of students' work from service-learning projects as evidence for tenure and promotion.

### **Summary**

Based on the themes in chapter IV, at Minnesota State University, Mankato, especially at the departmental level, service-learning is not recognized or valued as much as other forms of traditional scholarship. University administration does not require service-learning to be included in teaching and service. The university policies on tenure and promotion practices do not create an environment where community-engaged faculty feel confident using service-learning-related dossiers to achieve promotion and tenure. Emerging themes in chapter IV suggested that the university administration is not very

familiar with and does not value community-engaged scholarship. When community-engaged faculty file service-learning-related dossiers, there are no specific criteria for engaged scholarship in tenure and promotion requirements, even though the dean and the university administration may claim that they recognize community engagement as scholarship.

According to themes discussed in chapter IV, it can be deduced that MSU, Mankato has not institutionalized service-learning. There are no dedicated personnel, no specific office to assist and support community-engaged faculty, and no specific funding. MSU, Mankato has not applied or accepted the Carnegie classification for civic-engagement.

There is no evidence in the data suggesting that the current tenure and promotion criteria help or are designed for community-engaged faculty to succeed in their work. Due to the collective bargaining agreement, the university subscribes to the Inter-Faculty Organization's promotion and tenure criteria. However, these criteria do not reflect or recognize community-engaged scholarship specifically. As a result of the nature of the criteria, service-learning-related dossiers are absorbed into more traditional forms of scholarship in the tenure and promotion files. The majority of faculty participants were optimistic regarding the inclusion of service-learning dossiers in their promotion and tenure files. Most of the participants who filed these dossiers were promoted, and one faculty was tenured. However, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which their promotion and tenure success was related to the faculty's documentation of service-

learning and how much could be attributed to their hard work on non-service-learning components.

Based on the interviews, the researcher can conclude that community-engagement and service-learning are not supported and recognized at the same level as other traditional forms of scholarship at Minnesota State University, Mankato. However, some important questions remain. What should the university administration, deans, and chairpersons do to support community-engaged scholarship, community-engaged faculty, and service-learning programs? Should the university fund a community-engagement center and hire staff to support community-engaged faculty by running student background checks, finding community partners, helping to set up programs in the community, and recording student service-learning hours? Should deans use their episodic power to hire more community-engaged faculty while formally supporting them in the tenure and promotion process? Should the university make an effort to apply for the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement and institutionalize service-learning throughout the university? Asking these questions and openly discussing them will help everyone to come to a common understanding of the role of service-learning at MSU, Mankato.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Future researchers could build on this study in many ways, such as using a larger sample size. Only one dean participated, and their views cannot be representative of an entire university administration chain's value of service-learning on the promotion and tenure process. The current study identified several logistical barriers to community-

engaged faculty at MSU, Mankato in utilizing service-learning. These barriers included an unreasonable amount of extra work for faculty implementing a service-learning program, difficulty in finding community partners, and the absence of dedicated staff to process paperwork, such as running background checks. Future studies could be concentrated on exploring these barriers and identifying ways to solve the problems that they present. Interview questions and the framework for future studies could be designed with these issues in mind.

The current study provides valuable insight into community-engaged faculty's perspectives on how midsize, midwestern universities value service-learning in the promotion and tenure process. However, the current study did not distinguish and analyze tenure and promotion processes separately. It could be beneficial to analyze the promotion and tenure processes separately, even though they are similar in terms of application criteria and process. Future research could design the interview questions to differentiate between the content of service-learning-related dossiers in tenure and promotion files and to quantify their success rates separately. Future studies could recruit faculty based on what stage of promotion or tenure process they are in. Only one faculty participant in this study had gone through the tenure process, and eight faculty participants had gone or were about to go through the promotion process. Not many faculty utilize service-learning as a teaching method, so it was impossible to distinguish between tenure and promotion due to the small sample size.

Lastly, although it is challenging to receive permission from the IRB, it would be interesting to extend the current research to a physical analysis of community-engaged

faculty's tenure and promotion files. The future study could focus on how many service-learning-related dossiers are found in the faculty files, how many of such dossiers on average are needed to be promoted and tenured, and what percentage of dossiers are included in the faculty files represent traditional forms of scholarship.

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