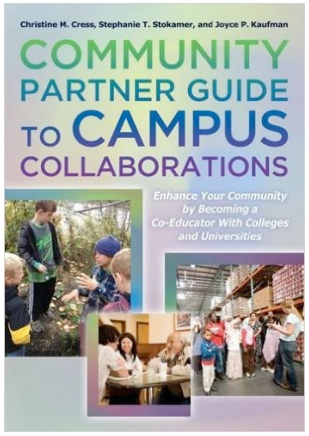

Community Partner Guide to Campus Collaborations: Enhancing Your Community by Becoming a Co-Educator With Colleges and Universities

Cress, Christine M.; Stokamer, Stephanie T.; and Kaufman, Joyce P.
Stylus Publishing, Llc., 2015

Book Review

Tags: civic engagement | civic learning | engaged teaching | service learning

Reviewed by: Steven Ibbotson, *Prairie Colleges*
Date Reviewed: March 14, 2016

Growing up with a father who served as the director of the service-learning experiences at a faith-based college, I heard many stories of the joys and challenges of academic and non-profit agencies trying to work together. Later in my own teaching career, similar stories emerged as I witnessed the power and problems of out-of-the-classroom learning experiences. With a clearly stated goal (12), the authors of *Community Partner Guide to Campus Collaboration* effectively present an orderly guide for non-academic organizations to begin to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with post-secondary institutions.

Building on the premise that “effective community-campus relationships educate students and enhance communities” (4), the authors provide multiple ideas and strategies for a community group to function in partnership with a post-secondary institution. After a brief introductory chapter, the book lays out in subsequent chapters particular ways for non-profit leaders to explore and establish potential relationships with colleges and instructors. Within the opening chapters, the authors provide a useful definition of reciprocity that notes the differences between charity and solidarity (41) in community-campus relationships. The authors set a foundation on which a mutually beneficial relationship for both organizational and individual involvement in such partnerships can be constructed. The book also presents a variety of examples to explain the concepts of community-campus relationships.

Building on the opening chapters, the authors outline specific steps to assist an agency

coordinator in both engaging faculty and empowering students for engaged learning. Again, a variety of practical examples and creative ideas are suggested. The final chapter on evaluation helps community partners, academic instructors, and students evaluate both the impact of their work with the organization and their own personal involvement and learning through such engaged learning experiences.

There is little to criticize about this book since it speaks clearly to both academic and non-academic organizations. The authors' illustrations demonstrate a breadth of experience working within both types of organizations and their writing style is welcoming to readers who may be unacquainted with how community group and college partnerships work together to produce significant student learning outcomes. Some checklists may have provided a helpful summary, but there are other visual clues in the book to emphasize their key points and demonstrate the benefits of this educational approach.

The authors are clearly convinced that "communities are stronger when campuses and community agencies collaborate because it creates knowledgeable and engaged students who give back to their communities as committed citizens long after they graduate" (108). Their manual, written specifically for helping non-academic people navigate the post-secondary world, also benefits academics interested in connecting their students to experiential learning opportunities.

https://wabash.center/resources/book_reviews/community-partner-guide-to-campus-collaborations-enhancing-your-community-by-becoming-a-co-educator-with-colleges-and-universities/