

# Collaborations: A Journal of Community-Based Research and Practice

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## Welcome to the inaugural issue of Collaborations: A Journal of Community-based Research and Practice

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# Welcome to the inaugural issue of Collaborations: A Journal of Community-based Research and Practice

## **Abstract**

This is an introduction to the inaugural issue of Collaborations: A Journal of Community-based Research and Practice. Collaborations is a free, open access, online journal, sponsored by the University of Miami and Rutgers University. We've created this journal to be a home for sharing research, practice, and learning emanating from community-university collaborations.

## **Keywords**

community engagement, collaboration, community-university partnerships

## **Cover Page Footnote**

Launching this journal is possible due to the efforts of Robin Bachin, Laura Kohn-Wood, Ahjane Billingsley, Jason Cohen, and Elizabeth McInerney at the University of Miami and our partners at Rutgers University, Maurice Elias, Ronald Quincy, Alison Reda, Rebecca Guardado, and Julia Ferris.

## **Introducing *Collaborations***

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Collaborations: A Journal of Community-based Research and Practice*. *Collaborations* is a free, open access, online journal, sponsored by the University of Miami and Rutgers University. We've created this journal to be a home for sharing research, practice, and learning emanating from community-university collaborations. We humbly step into this space alongside trailblazers such as the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, the *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, the *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, the *Journal of Public Scholarship in Higher Education*, *Public: A Journal of Imagining America*, and *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action* – to name a few. Like these excellent outposts, we seek to offer an additional platform for highlighting community-engaged research and practice that showcases, examines, and evaluates the many different forms and aspects of community-university collaborations. This includes the development of theory to guide effective education, research, and practice collaborations, and the outcomes of collaborations that have implications for policy, practice, learning, and public scholarship.

We seek to advance public scholarship and authentic community–university partnerships by publishing thoughtful, peer-reviewed scholarly articles, case studies of exemplary university–community collaborative projects, and stories of learning in community–university partnerships. In our view, when there is an ongoing two-way engagement process whereby community and academic partners have an understanding of the reality and context of each other's environments, our research, public scholarship, community betterment, and social change efforts are stronger. We privilege stories of collaborative, equitable partnerships that promote capacity building and co-learning among all partners. Furthermore, we hope to elevate the experience and context of community partners by providing a space for community groups to share

lessons learned from the community perspective. We celebrate community knowledge as credible and invaluable to achieving successful community–university partnerships and generating knowledge and action for human and community well-being.

The journal will highlight projects and scholarship that reflect the values of inclusion, fairness, collaboration, reciprocity, accessibility of language, reflection, continuous learning, the interconnection of scholarship and practice, and openness and respect for a plurality of methodologies and sources of knowledge. Although *Collaborations* is an academic publication, we strive to move beyond academic boundaries to engage in action-oriented educational and scholarly partnerships in and with communities for educators, researchers, students, local community residents, organizers, activists, and public scholars.

### **Our Three Sections**

*Collaborations* will accept three different types of submissions, each with its own section and review process. First, the *Scholarly Research* section features more traditional reports of community-engaged, action research and theory related to diverse types of community-university collaborations. We focus on submissions from community-university partnerships that are developed and implemented in a way that is transparent, equitable, sustainable, and accountable to both community and academic partners and focused on topics, questions, and methods that are developed and structured in ways that are relevant to the lived experience of community groups. Papers submitted to this section will go through a traditional peer-review process.

Our second section will emphasize the ‘community’ perspective of teaching, research, and action collaborations to offer readers the opportunity to understand community-based organizational structures, new ways of thinking about partnerships, and how to overcome key challenges. This section will foreground the voice of community partners and is meant to be a space for those working in partnerships to speak out about key issues or to discuss collaborative efforts in progress. Non-academic voices as primary authors and contributors are highly encouraged for this section.

Our third area is devoted to stories and reflections on experiential learning in the context of community-based research and action projects, public scholarship, and community service-learning related teaching and coursework. We are committed to supporting faculty, students, and community partners as they take stock of their experiences of community engagement and reflect on their contribution to authentic collaborations and civic life. All sections, especially the latter two, are open to multimedia submissions, including but not limited to still images, video, and audio recordings.

### **This First Issue**

This first issue of *Collaborations* includes ten articles from a diverse set of authors covering a broad range of community-based research and action. In the category of *Scholarly Research*, we have eight papers that embody the principles and practices of the journal as well as the collaborative writing process. For example, Doug Perkins and his colleagues from Vanderbilt and partners at the University of Louisville, Equal Opportunity Schools Seattle, and the University of Northern Colorado present the Peabody-Vanderbilt Field School model of intercultural civic education, service-learning, action research training, and collaboration in their paper "Thinking and Acting both Globally and Locally: The Field School in Intercultural Education as a Model for Action-Research Training and Civic Learning."

"Latinos Unidos por la Salud: The Process of Developing an Immigrant Community Research Team" by Lisa Vaughn of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and her coauthors describe the development and practice of an immigrant community research team created to investigate and improve research quality regarding health-related needs, beliefs, and behaviors of recent Latino immigrants.

Katherine Hogan and her colleagues from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte present a framework for conceptualizing student involvement in community-university partnerships around capacity building. Their paper, "A Capacity Building Framework for Community-University Partnerships," argues that conceptualizing partnerships along five levels of capacity building helps frame communication about agencies capacity

building agenda, focuses efforts on addressing organizational needs, and establishes expectations for the scope of student work.

In another paper discussing learnings from a U.S. – Ghana collaborative, Alice Lesnick tackles issues of power, communication, and creativity in her paper and challenges us to understand the purpose of cross-cultural work as "lagim tehi tuma" -- Dagbani for "thinking together," to develop knowledge, questions, and relationships not just people, countries, or cultures. Drawing on Apusigah's framing of "tullum," an indigenous, gendered approach to development, Lesnick advances a conception of collaboration that accepts limitation, impermanence, and risk as part of sustainability.

Other scholarly works in this issue discuss the importance of auxiliary theories in research on community-university partnerships (Peterson et al.), describe a college outreach work-study mentoring program rooted in university-school partnerships (Martinez, Everman, & Haber-Curran), examine small group conversations between preservice teachers (PSTs), in their third quarter of a four-quarter teacher education secondary program, and mentors from local communities (Guillen & Napolitan), and highlight a partnership to develop a culturally and linguistically competent website for long-term caregivers (López-Anuarbe, Cruz-Saco, & Bennett).

In our *University-Community Collaborations* section we feature one paper by Terri Herbert and Judith Lewandowski that follows a three-year grant funded program with a focus upon building community partnerships through a place-based, environmental education lens. Their examination of a place-based curriculum connected through the sciences suggests a model for creating intentional partnerships as a means to blend community and content in place-based education.

And finally, in our section featuring *Reflections on Experiential Learning*, graduate student Annelise Feliu shares her creative audio "story of self" as a reflection on her time in internship at the Center for Social Well Being in the Peruvian Andes. Feliu provides a prime example of the types of reflective pieces by students we hope to feature in the journal in the years ahead.

We hope you enjoy this first issue of *Collaborations*. We invite you to submit your own work and ask that you encourage your colleagues, students, and partners on campuses and in the community to share their work with us. As Simon Fraser's president and vice chancellor Andrew Petter (2017) wrote recently "never have universities been more needed, and never have we had more to gain" (para 12) from meaningful engagement with local communities. Moving beyond our institutional boundaries to engage in educational and scholarly partnerships in and with our communities will drive the solutions needed to create healthy and just communities. There are significant ongoing challenges to community–university partnerships, but we keep at it because we know we must work together in order to advance our social justice aims. It is our hope that *Collaborations* can contribute in some small way to breaking down community-university boundaries to help promote what Senior Scholar and Director of Civic Learning and Democracy Initiatives at the Association of American Colleges and Universities Caryn McTighe Musil (2013) calls "generative partnerships" - where traditional boundaries are reimagined, partners employ democratic processes to achieve genuinely reciprocal engagement, institutions emphasize their citizenship, and effectiveness is measured by social impact.

## References

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