Organization Development for an Engaged Campus: Assessing Narratives and Architecture to Direct Future Change

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Organization Development for an Engaged Campus: Assessing Narratives and Architecture to Direct Future Change

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At the intersection of the fields of engagement and organization development lie the strategies, structures, and processes of community-engaged praxis. This qualitative inquiry focused on the experiences of community engagement professionals at an urban, state-related research university. This study provided an understanding of the activities that contribute to the institutionalization of engagement through the lens of the architectural approach. The architectural approach addresses the key aspects of organization development, including the institutional conditions, design, and infrastructure that interconnect and integrate with narratives across different levels of the university as a system. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the institution’s engaged architecture through semistructured interviews, surveys, and artifact analysis. The qualitative practices aligned with the premises and practices of dialogic organization development. Findings include narratives that emphasize the importance of relationships, the values of the engagement profession, conflict management as a key tool, and the challenges found in disconnects from the strategies or architecture that clarify and support institutional community engagement architecture. These narratives intersect with critical context and institutional praxis that suggests a future organizational change model that institutionalizes community engagement through open-ended inquiry and artifacts that advance key aspects of the practitioner experience.
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1.0 Introduction

Community engagement praxis for large higher education institutions (HEIs) is a process primarily indicated by top-down strategic aspirations rather than the experiences and goals of the practitioners closest to the work. Focused on the experiences of community engagement professionals (CEPs), this study was a means of evaluating and eventually reorienting the engagement organization development (OD) system to have a greater impact. The unique engagement architecture that indicates and is indicated by CEPs is both a movement and a “loosely interrelated set of programs, practices, and philosophies” related to the civic purposes of higher education (Butin & Seider, 2012, p. 3). Institutionalization, or the diffusion of engagement as innovation (Farner, 2019; Goodyear, 2019), is a unique change management process throughout the core missions and functions of HEIs (Weiss & Norris, 2019). Scholars have evolved institutionalization from indicator-based models (Hollander et al., 2002) to more fluid analyses relevant to specific institutional contexts (Brinkley et al., 2012; Dostilio, 2017).

Although the field of engagement, including its theory and practice, has undergone significant revision and refinement over the past 30 years, the contexts used for this study occurred in the past 5 to 10 years. There have been significant advances in the standards of practice and competencies of the field of community engagement in recent years (Dostilio, 2017; Dostilio & Welch, 2019). That literature was a foundation for developing the Campus Compact’s Community Engagement Professional Credential, one of the few formal recognition frameworks for CEPs outside the curricular offerings of individual colleges and universities (Campus Compact, 2020). The goal of this evaluative dissertation in practice was to address ongoing changes at the
University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), a large, urban, state-related research university, and make recommendations for the future design of engagement systems.

As a staff person responsible for facilitating engagement at Pitt, I have struggled to see how roles like mine fit contextually within higher education priorities. Despite the healthy body of research that has emerged over the past decade, discourse within the subfield of OD in engagement has continued to present high-level leader, researcher, faculty, or student experiences as the key drivers of institutional investment (Brancato, 2003; Franz et al., 2012; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; O’Meara et al., 2011; Wangelin, 2019). Even in Strum et al.’s (2011) architectural approach for full participation, student success and faculty diversity are central innovations that integrate with and connect to institutional rewards and supportive institutional cultures. This study focused on the experiences of staff and appointment stream faculty CEPs as unique and key stakeholders who shape the university ecosystem. CEPs take on a multitude of professional roles across academic and community-based networks. CEPs’ civic agency (Boyte, 2009, p. 1) and referent power, or ability to inspire and influence others, are the driving forces of higher education engagement agendas (Adams, 2014; Brown & Moore, 2019; Dostilio & McReynolds, 2015; Farner, 2019; Harden & Loving, 2015; Kiyama et al., 2012; Liang & Sandmann, 2015; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010; Weiss & Norris, 2018). At Pitt, these positions contribute to the institutional culture and goals to inform a broad outreach and engagement portfolio.

Through qualitative methods, such as those used by Farner (2019) in a case study of the institutionalization of engagement with semistructured interviews and surveys, this study was a means of assessing the relationship between CEP experiences and Pitt’s engaged architecture. Engaging CEPs who participated in the Engagement Community of Practice at Pitt showed the organizational levers used to support and advance individual professional identity and make key
connections to the broader engaged institutional identity. This study focused on why and how particular methods connect CEPs, their institution’s conditions and practices, and the field to enable “second-order” (Bartunek & Moch, 1987, p. 486) changes to the institution as a system. Bartunek and Moch (1987) described the key differences between first-order, second-order, and third-order changes. First-order changes are incremental changes, second-order changes contribute to altering the organizing frameworks of a system, and third-order changes result in systems’ capacity to adapt at will.

1.1 Positionality and Institutional Inheritance

I am a Black female scholar-practitioner who identifies as an emerging CEP and engagement leader and administrator. I used critical praxis, defined by Mahon et al. (2019) as “a social-justice oriented…focus on asking critical questions and creating conditions for positive change” (p. 464), my personal process of navigating institutional conditions, and my inquiry and methodologies to inform my orientation to the literature. I am relatively new to my identity as a higher education staff person, as I have a professional background as a human services practitioner and nonprofit consultant. Therefore, my professional background has significantly influenced my approach to professional learning. I remain hyperaware that I have joined a lineage of prominent scholar-practitioners who have served as sponsors, mentors, and historians at my institution. My orientation to such a large organization showed me that I had entered the right unit at the right time. My immediate supervisor and mentor, Dr. John Wilds, holds decades of institutional knowledge. Wilds joined the university as the head of human resources and has used his strong network of internal relationships to build a culture of mutually beneficial relationships. During his
work, he depended on his colleagues’ generosity and in-kind services; in return, he offered his social capital to thank them through award nominations and special recognitions at the institution. Wilds was a key advocate for volunteerism and engagement before the institution had any formalized infrastructure for support. Wilds’ efforts, along with those he loved to call his “co-conspirators,” resulted in a federally funded Community Outreach Partnerships Center. Wilds also expanded student civic involvement by supporting the creation of the Office of PittServes within the Division of Student Affairs and an eventually successful proposal from the Staff Council to establish a permanently approved absence policy for staff professional development and volunteerism. I credit Wilds for my inheritance of critical documents, agreements, and negotiations to which my colleagues at large do not have access.

I am grateful to have also been warmly introduced to the predecessor of a significant portion of my internal capacity-building work in the Academically Based Community Engagement Committee (ABCE), an informal coalition of faculty and staff interested in advancing the status of engaged scholarship within Pitt. I joined the university when Wilds began to look toward retirement, and Pitt’s leaders sought to formalize and expand their investment in place-based engagement. At that time, the senior vice chancellor for engagement hired a key leader, Dr. Lina Dostilio, to catalyze the Community Engagement Center initiative. The initiative was a body of work focused on the importance of place, relationships, and investments established over decades. Dostilio highlighted an area of shared interest and opportunity in my own journey: unpacking the field of community engagement through its practitioners. Although discovery is an ongoing process, I take great pride in serving as a resource to my colleagues and administrators. As I increase my understanding of the competencies of engagement and community partnership, I seek to shift from working as a convener and facilitator to a mobilizer and advisor of the engaged
workforce at the university. Therefore, I strive to serve as a change management or OD practitioner and a community engagement professional. Franz et al. (2012) stated, “A key component of catalyzing cultural change is assessing the current culture of an institution to inform an appropriate change strategy” (p. 29). While an assessment focuses on diagnostic methods and priorities, this inquiry focused on the dialogic principles helpful in opening up change from a starting and ending state to a process of ongoing active consideration and contention.

1.2 Broader Problem Area: Anchor Institutions and Community Engagement

There are varying impetuses for college and university leaders to invest in anchor and engagement initiatives intentionally; therefore, their supportive infrastructure also varies (Bergen & Sladek, 2019; Hollander et al., 2002). Institutionally meaningful responses to societal realities have become more visible as differentiating opportunities for appeals to both the academic market (Brinkley et al., 2012; Mahon et al., 2019; Ozias & Pasque, 2019) and those critical of the investments that powerful organizations have made in “creating conditions for positive change” (Butin & Seider, 2012; Mahon et al., 2019). Organization leaders capable of contributing to broad protective economic and social-determinant strategies that acknowledge the importance of place (Weiss & Norris, 2019), or anchor institutions, have recognized the potential of facilitating (Furco, 2010) and the peril of avoiding (Boyte, 2009; Franz, 2014) solutions to collective challenges.

Anchor and community-engaged bodies of work regularly require university leaders to use resources from business and operations, research, economic partnerships, curricular and co-curricular opportunities, and community affairs functions to mobilize (Strum et al., 2011). Scholars who use the anchor mission theory and practice focus on the institution and its role in collective
impact efforts, describing them as a campus-community engagement strategy or community engagement. Pitt has a strong anchor identity in Southwestern Pennsylvania, as it is the largest and only state-related institution in the metro area with over two dozen colleges and universities.

The economic and societal impacts of the people, programs, and purposes of Pitt occur alongside a research enterprise of one billion dollars in annual expenditures. Pitt’s ability to use all available types of power in a region with economic growth in professional sectors and spatial and social exclusion within communities has caused significant polarities, tensions, and contradictions. Those contradictions occur primarily within the organization itself, which is a predominantly White institution with underrepresented populations of students, faculty, and staff seeking to accelerate justice, equity, and inclusion both on and off campus. The university’s market-driven innovation and economy-oriented success have provided the opportunity to invest in the anchor work of supporting economic opportunity within the region, particularly during the tenure of its current chancellor.

Furthermore, the strength of Pitt’s unique identity has attracted leaders who created space for truth-telling and critical praxis to reposition the organization to focus on learning and listening across key strategic initiatives. The Office of the Chancellor created a task force to implement a critical lens for business and operations. The task force’s purposes are to prioritize doing business with minority, women-owned, and disadvantaged businesses; hire from specific neighborhoods of commitment; and construct facilities with contractors of diverse size and ownership. Deans within the schools of education, law, health sciences, and others support the anchor work by creating centers and initiatives focused on justice, inclusion, and social determinants. Those broad, progressive anchor initiatives are occurring at Pitt. However, this study had a narrower purpose of unpacking the institutional conditions needed to foster and sustain the shift from public good to
public-engagement knowledge regimes (see Bergen & Sladek, 2019). Bergen and Sladek (2019) explored the dominant regimes, or academic cultures, of power and privilege and the politics of public engagement across institutions to reinforce the shift of engaged scholarship and practice toward strategic considerations to lead with desired values and operate as part of a broader ecosystem of problem-solving.

1.3 Broader Problem Area: Community Engagement Professionals

The civic pathways or models of community and civic engagement have a shared grounding orientation and aspiration to produce collaborative spaces where academy members can cede or share power with broad external constituencies and exchange knowledge and reciprocal benefits. Scholars of community engagement have highlighted the critical aspects of institutionalization, including supportive policies and pathways, the diversity of boundary-spanners in the field, the best practices for implementation and impact inquiry, faculty and student development, core competencies, epistemologies, and critical commitment (Brinkley et al., 2012; Brown & Moore, 2019; Cream & Manners, 2020; Dostilio, 2017; Farner, 2019).

Also evident is the shift of field norms from paternal dichotomies with communities toward an active welcome of critical and liberatory praxis. Traditional and neo-liberal routines within HEIs create tension or outright conflict with ethical and advanced community-engaged practices (Bergen & Sladek, 2019; Cream & Manners, 2020). The sharp differences in priorities have resulted in unique learning and development goals to enable agile and adaptive partnership specialists, with the goals providing shared identity across institutions and different professional and paraprofessional roles. Through their roles, CEPs serve as points of distribution for the
leadership of a shared-engagement function with unique conditions depending on the unit-level contexts (Liang & Sandmann, 2015).

CEPs influence organizational culture and engagement through active participation in the praxis of the institution and the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of their collective work. This claim aligns with the literature and the perspectives of administrators who prioritize engagement at their universities. The data presented in this study indicate that CEPs have highly relationship-oriented roles. Strong interconnections, institutional histories, and compelling storytelling have entered the field’s narratives, as indicated by institutional practices and traditional ways of knowing and information-sharing within the academy.

In this study, I sought to strengthen and affirm the methods of practice, modalities of knowledge generation, and unique values and beliefs of community engagement praxis. This goal entailed considering the CEPs’ unique voices within my engagement ecosystem with the critical lens of another interdisciplinary field focused on ongoing, systematic efforts for improvement. Evaluating and advancing the connection between engagement institutionalization and CEP experiences with OD methods provided a structured framework for this study. According to the Organizational Development Network (2021), dialogic OD means establishing organizations as “social networks of meaning-making that create the realities that people experience and react to” (para. 3). In this study, OD epistemologies were the sources used to acknowledge the highly relational work and orientation of CEPs within higher education and situate the community of practice model within the study context.
1.4 Broader Problem Area: Organization Development and Architecture for Engagement

The field of OD originated in the 1950s and 1960s with a coalescing set of practices that align across five primary stems that pull from T-group laboratory training to strategic change efforts (Cummings, 2015, pp. 7-13). As society modernized globalization and rapidly advancing technology heavily influenced the way that organizations made decisions that would increase effectiveness. Those realities are mentioned by Cummings in the closing of their introductory chapter on OD, but is more meaningfully referenced as I began to unpack the beginnings of human-centered design and “design thinking” as an approach that could begin to address complex, open-ended, and ambiguous problems that the firm IDEO specializes in. The IDEO design thinking website (2022) provides definitions, resources, and applications of the concept that served as a strong intermediary that bridged the key research that between traditional OD and dialogic OD. The connecting language of architecture, or the intentional design and infrastructure of human systems, remains a strong aligning force between the fields. Like engagement, the semantics of human-centered design have multiple uses across disciplines, grounded by the orientation and principles with the most effectiveness. OD, human-centered design, and engagement all position their practice and orientation as innovation from more diagnostic, prescriptive, or power over methods to which organizations can default to accelerate change or influence behavior. Power is a concept I have referenced many times and will continue to refer to as central to the meaning-making of CEPs, their unique positionality, and their engagement with various constituencies.

OD is a means of using scientific inquiry to examine organizations to achieve meaningful change (Bushe & Marshak, 2009). OD has highly collaborative methods often used within the participatory spaces established by CEPs (Bushe & Marshak, 2014). Dialogic OD indicates that organizations cannot have preplanned outcomes for change and that the process can be more
critical than the changes themselves. Bushe and Marshak (2014) stated, “Emphasis is placed on creating conditions for new and different conversations to take place, particularly by creating opportunities to evoke new conversations and to change who is normally involved in conversations” (p. 15). Generative change is the process of OD. With significant overlap, the self-organizing tendencies of participatory-stakeholder engagement and the principles of community-engagement praxis align with the OD framework, theory, and practice.

1.5 Statement of the Problem of Practice

The guiding questions of this evaluative dissertation in practice were:

- What are the primary organizational conditions that inform CEP professional identity and efficacy?
- What is the institutional infrastructure most likely to advance a cohesive engagement agenda?
- What aspects of the design of Pitt’s engagement praxis are most accessible to CEPs?
- What aspects of the institutional architecture serve as limiting factors for CEP efficacy?

Community engagement is a pedagogical and andragogical method for teaching and research a scholarly discipline for theory and practice, as co-curricular pursuits that respond to shared societal challenges, and within the anchor frameworks of HEIs (Barker, 2011). This research inquiry showed how intentional organizational architecture supports CEPs’ unique needs and the institutionalization of an engagement agenda. The study’s goal was to understand the conditions and culture of the engagement praxis. A better understanding of CEPs’ experiences
could show how to develop generative linkages and learning spaces for the organization and the field of engagement.

The strong assets and initiatives of Pitt’s broader community engagement agenda include historically rooted methods, key partners, norms, and relationships retained or passed down through institutional traditions. The inheritance of engagement priorities could help catalyze the early stages of cross-institutional ecosystem building; however, it could limit the ability of practitioners and their champions to effectively situate and resource key OD levers through adaptive change. In response, my aim was to evaluate current beliefs about the infrastructure, design, conditions, and artifacts of the collective engagement praxis (see Smith et al., 2010) with OD principles.
Figure 1 shows the key components of each aspect of inquiry and the publicly accessible artifacts that are the foundation of the greater architecture of engagement. Together, these pieces comprise the unique institutional realities of CEP experiences and narratives. Praxis has many definitions; in this study, praxis was the ongoing process of contextualizing critical engagement through adaptive scholarship, practice, and impact. Praxis is a concept based on social justice, change over neutrality, and the social, political, and economic implications of the practice and research (Burke & Lumb, 2018; Freire, 1972; Zuber-Skerritt, 2001). Freire (1972) described praxis as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (p. 52). Freire argued that people must do more than study the world; they must also create a more just world (Stuart, 2020).

An engagement agenda with CEPs’ experiences as the focus of its systemic epistemologies requires understanding liberatory and counter-cultural empiricism. I have evidence of this organizational problem due to my experience with several processes, including my professional orientation to the university, the process of accumulating and unpacking engaged scholarship and practice data for a Carnegie Classification in Engagement application, and my responsibility to support institutional capacity for engagement as the Director of Community Engagement for the Office of Engagement and Community Affairs (ECA). I recognize the significant benefit and luck of having a strong CEP mentor who could connect me to a formal community; therefore, I have committed to actively changing that condition of practice for others. I was frustrated by how many times Pitt CEPs have had to create new professional learning and the impact of varied access to critical people, tools, information, and infrastructure on their boundaries of practice. As a practitioner, I hope to co-create opportunities to increase the visibility of CEPs in higher education and connect specific learning practices to a greater understanding of Pitt’s shared engagement agenda.
Informed by practitioners implementing the work, I intentionally characterized the OD agenda as an innovation aligned with institutional reporting and outcomes. Farner (2019) stated, “Diffusion of innovation describes how change takes root when it is channeled through individuals’ actions and interactions” (p. 148). This understanding of innovation aligns with dialogic OD’s role in understanding and expressing engagement across the institution. Noted Brown and Moore (2019), “CEPs play a singular role…to understand and enact engagement not as a product or an outcome, but as a sustainable process for building relationships with/in the community served by a particular institution.” (p. 5). CEPs are well-positioned to distribute organizational broadly across power structures due to their internalized culture of boundary spanning and cooperation. Describing CEPs, Farner said,

They were community-based problem solvers, engagement champions, and internal engagement advocates who exercised deep listening; solution-focused, big-picture thinking; and a willingness to make the hierarchical boundaries of the institution more permeable, encouraging a leadership culture of openness, accessibility, and approachability. (p. 150)

Sustainability occurs based on the advancement and assessment of a praxis useful for making the most of the unique engaged identity of an institution.

I focused on the conditions that are generative inputs to CEP community-building, organizing, and learning and development at Pitt to clarify the outputs and outcomes that indicate institutional-level engagement identity and agenda. CEPs at Pitt can feel more seen, connected, and valued at the institution via the deployment of concrete resources and strategies for integrating their goals into guiding strategies and definitions. The goal of this multipurpose language was not
to be obtuse but to encapsulate the ways of being and knowing inherent in intentionally iterative and open-ended community-centered exploration and adaptive change management practices.
2.0 Organizational System

Pitt received the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s 2020 Elective Classification for Community Engagement. The application process primarily consisted of cross-institutional self-study and detailed reporting by a select committee of internal leaders and community partners. “To become a Classified institution requires the investment of substantial effort by participating institutions to provide evidence of the commitment to a special purpose, demonstrated with precision across the breadth of the institution.” (Carnegie Elective Classifications, 2022, para. 4). Therefore, the elective classification is the most visible and valuable external validation for HEIs with an investment in institution-wide engagement.

Since its debut in 2006, the elective classification for engagement has been a credential that provides market benefits to colleges and universities with engagement as part of their institutional identities. An internet search of 12 of the 119 institutions that received the designation in 2020 showed that, at a minimum, 10 published internal news articles identifying engagement centers or centralized units as responsible for the engagement function. The data-intensive application allowed Pitt’s leaders to assemble and unpack activities in a new way in partnership with and for the broader community. The process of applying commenced in 2018 due to several factors. In 2004, 2004, and 2011, faculty senate plenaries highlighted the diversity of efforts to develop shared solutions between the academy and the broader region through engaged scholarship. I located this information through an institutional artifact analysis, which included the documents of the university’s engagement unit, shared governance structures, and academic units with numerous engagement initiatives. The document analysis provided further context for the semistructured interviews in the study, showing the unique institutional strengths of Pitt as an
engaged research university across myriad areas. However, the analysis also found persistent and thematic missed opportunities to strengthen the university’s engaged ecosystem. In the 2024 reaccreditation process, consistent institutional progress will be a factor in retaining the classification. Therefore, the classification process requires a structure, timeline, and urgency to advance specific capacity-building measures to support faculty, students, staff, and communities in data-informed ways and encourage institutional assessment and evaluation architecture.

As an individual who has spent 5 years or less in higher education, I believe the culture at Pitt aligns with discipline-focused or unit-based outcomes. There have been attempts to develop a culture with a shared and mutually agreed-upon context of practice through internal funding opportunities such as the Pitt Seed Grant. However, the institution still requires interdisciplinary support for impact areas or intersectional solutions for social determinants. A space for internal advocacy and a commitment to organizational learning focused on the CEP critical context could be a way to develop strategic nonperformatives for engagement and couch them in the experiences and practices of CEPs.

Pitt’s longest-standing community outreach initiative is the Community Leisure Learn Program, which began more than 50 years ago. According to oral tradition, the program was a partial response to community backlash against the institution’s leaders using eminent domain to increase the campus size and boundary. The program provides health and wellness programming and coaching for the Pittsburgh zip codes closest to the campus. The program is one of many opportunities to provide restorative and informative connections to neighbors and the region. Institutional development and its ties to gentrification have been topics of internal discussion and unpacking (Harrell, 2021). However, I struggled to uncover the most contested histories of the institution and the spaces it acquired over the decades. There are conflicting oral histories,
institutional memories, timelines, and characterizations of land acquisition. 2002 coverage of the impending purchase that Mr. Redwood referenced in the Harrell article indicated that the former owner had cleared the land and replaced public housing units with nearby mixed-income development (Barnes & Ridder, 2002).

The ECA is the central point of contact and connection for the university’s community affairs and partnerships functions. Pitt has had a Community Engagement Center (CEC) since 2017. CECs are a part of a larger place-based strategy for providing communities with a central point of contact and entry to the university.

The Office of Engagement and Community Affairs (ECA) champions community engagement efforts across the Pitt system. ECA facilitates strategic community initiatives, leads the university’s place-based engagements in the city of Pittsburgh, collaborates with the Provost’s Office to support engaged scholarship, maintains positive relationships with the neighbors and organizations closest to our campus footprint, and ensures that Pitt is a partner and asset to communities, locally to globally. (University of Pittsburgh Office of Engagement and Community Affairs, 2022, para. 1)

The goal of ECA is to cultivate, manage, and grow internal and external capacity in support of asset-based community and economic development, community-engaged teaching and learning, research, and volunteerism while encouraging Pitts students to be good actors in neighborhood contexts. Pitt’s 2017–2018 Neighborhood Commitments focus on (a) Oakland, the location of Pitt’s main campus and the second-largest economic district in the city; (b) Homewood, a neighborhood that became predominately Black in the 1950s and 1960s due to urban displacement, undergoing White flight, blight, and persistent gun violence; (c) the Hill District, the former
cultural center of Black life and the arts decimated due to redevelopment; and (d) Hazelwood, a neighborhood undergoing significant population shifts due to intensifying real estate speculation and investments in the local innovation and life sciences ecosystem.

My place in this work is both internal and external facing. I liaison with Pitt’s partners and community groups (homeowners and long-time residents). I support the efforts of the Oakland Business Improvement District and its members (institutions and business owners) and work with faculty and staff to elevate community-engaged scholarship. I also locate the necessary conditions and capacity support that stakeholders need for effective partnerships and mutually beneficial projects, support the work of the CECs within the team, and organize faculty and staff opportunities to spend time on skilled and unskilled volunteer projects. Additionally, I develop student-facing programs and events under the “Be a Good Neighbor” banner and field general inquiries from community audiences related to university resources and responses.

Because of the wide breadth of stakeholders involved in university partnerships, I manage up, down, and across overlapping power structures. Historically, universities have been the primary resources generator in the form of capacity, funds, and solutions (Bergen & Sladek, 2019; Boyte, 2009; Franz, 2014; Tryon & Madden, 2019; Wangelin, 2019); however, this role leads to an inherent, persistent power inequity showing communities as problems, clients, or passive recipients of philanthropic goals (Jacob et al., 2015; Sandmann & Weerts, 2008; Strum, 2011). Further complications for partnerships include the various experiences and identifications within the academic body. Undergraduate and graduate students, researchers, professors, and staff engagement professionals work alongside the community in varying ways and with competing priorities.
The City of Pittsburgh has strong and long-standing community-based leadership, which can present challenges to partnerships driven by students or faculty who lack institutional knowledge. The region’s persistent challenges have had unacceptable outcomes for Black and Brown women, children, young people, and adults (Pittsburgh, 2017, 2018). The damning data (Howell et al., 2019) led to the creation of coalitions of targeted support (e.g., Black Women’s Policy Agenda, Black Girls Equity Alliance, Black Women for a Better Education, Equitable and Just Platform Pittsburgh) that address deeply entrenched racism, apathy, and disinvestment across all local societal systems. Howell et al. (2019) stated,

Results suggest that for White residents, Pittsburgh ranks in the middle 50 percent of cities. That is, for the majority of indicators, Pittsburgh’s White residents are comparable to their White counterparts in other U.S. cities. However, on some indicators, like poverty, the inequality between White men and White women is higher in Pittsburgh than in other cities. For AMLON residents, especially women, Pittsburgh ranks at or above average on the vast majority of indicators. However, for Black residents, Pittsburgh falls far below similar cities. Black women and men in other cities have better health, income, employment, and educational outcomes than Pittsburgh’s Black residents. (p. 5)

The gravitas of word and deed of these pillars of community power could create an unstable introduction to engaged scholarship and practice for underprepared individuals. According to emeritus faculty and staff scholar-practitioners at Pitt, the Pittsburgh communities have long and rich oral histories of the success and harm caused by institutions, which can influence the integrity of new partnerships before they begin.
This organizational history and location and its inextricable links to a region in pursuit of livability and innovation have produced a far-reaching and justifiable skepticism of institutional involvement. This skepticism affects CEPs and requires a specific type of orientation and development that a strictly academic lens cannot address. Now approaching 5 years at Pitt, I recognize the significant amount of time I spent without the benefits of a formal community. Independently identifying positional and functional centers of expertise that could provide advice and an understanding of institutional culture and priorities for engagement was an exercise that many of my peers and colleagues took on during their onboarding and orientation to the institution and the field. However, I was frustrated to see how often Pitt CEPs had to create their onboarding goals and find professional learning supports. Varied access to critical people, tools, information, and infrastructure has a significant impact on the boundaries of CEP practice.

CEPs at predominantly White institutions tend to have unique and diverse professional identities compared to HEI administrators and units outside their engagement function. The conditions needed for CEPs to thrive are similar to those needed to consult and consider professional staff from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds. Strum et al. (2011) indicated the need to consider “full participation” and its intersections with diversity and inclusion efforts.

Despite efforts to focus on the engagement and OD frameworks, I am a student of an educational center purpose-built to address equity. A significant benefit of reorienting system conditions for engagement through CEPs’ voices is articulating how HEIs can address the needs of those who assume the labor of institutional boundary spanning. Acknowledging the full cost of participation of those who intertwine their personal and civic lives with their professional duties can be challenging. An even more difficult task is assessing the responsibility placed on CEPs who
balance an understanding of themselves alongside how they fulfill their roles in communities that reflect some portion of their identities. Encouraging self-efficacy and “power within” for CEPs is a way for the organizational climate, culture, routines, assumptions, resources, relationships, and unsaid truths to intersect with their praxis. Through inquiry, reflection, and evaluation, this design and infrastructure will shift from diagnostic frameworks toward liberatory and affirming realities.

2.1 Inputs to the System: Who Is Involved and Affected

2.1.1 Community Engagement Professionals

The primary research questions focused on the experiences and beliefs of those who externally serve, collaborate, and conduct mutually beneficial work on behalf of the institution. I did not focus on students and community partners (though they are clear priorities) and researched CEPs to reaffirm a professional and immediate lens. At Pitt, CEPs within my sphere of practice tend to be staff due to functional and hierarchical differences in roles and responsibilities for external engagement. The primary faculty overlap with staff having active roles in program development and administration as part of their duties outside curriculum-based civic pathways. Unlike the faculty who orient their work to obtain tenure and promotions, professors of practice or appointment stream faculty serve as practitioners by engaging external partners toward collective spaces and goals.

CEPs are conveners, facilitators, and organizers who take a long view of the change-oriented goals of community engagement. They invite others—to invest
with them in the short-term steps of a messy and meticulous process even as they work for long-term change. (Brown & Moore, 2019, p. 6)

CEPs are the stewards and diffusers of culture and innovation within the institution. They continuously advocate for the university to have liberatory values and encourage system praxis toward that aspiration.

Advancing an organizational understanding and supporting CEPs have well-documented benefits in the literature on institutional engagement. Creating space for innovation within community-engaged teaching, research, service, and anchor missions of HEIs occurs through interdisciplinary change agendas that provide a community voice and opportunities. Boyte (2009) reported, “Seeing institutions as communities, building public relationships, undertaking intentional changes in their cultures to make them more public, and thinking in political terms, are largely foreign to academic and professional organizations” (p. 27). CEPs realize themselves and organize across the institution in inherently political ways. Assembling allies requires knowledge of historical contexts, priorities, and competing agendas that could impact the success of engagement initiatives. According to Farner (2019), organizing is a critical initial early investment strategy in a more intentional professional learning agenda:

Campus leaders also built a ‘coalition of the willing,’ a critical mass of internal supporters with a shared philosophy who utilized strategic integration of new employees into the organization, the intentional placement of community engagement conveners, and community member testimonials to effect change. (pp. 149–150)

“Within this networked learning tradition, there has been a strong interest in critical and emancipatory approaches to supporting adult and professional learning” (Goodyear, 2019, p. 240).
Traditional power comparatives of community-engaged scholarship and practice inevitably devalue nonacademic priorities and positionalities at odds with competitive market forces. However, by the nature of CEPs’ practice, their relationships with external and nonacademic stakeholders are a significant aspect of their professional performance metrics and aspirations.

2.1.2 Institutional Academic and Administrative Leadership

These groups have a market or mission interest in service-learning, outreach, or community engagement pedagogies. They are responsible for resourcing, facilitating, or leading external relations, community and economic development, and anchor functions for their institutions. Across Pitt, deans, executives, and administrators are vested in ensuring that Pitt’s organizational reputation continues to attract high-quality employees, students, and researchers. Institutional leaders have the power to resource and add capacity to engaged initiatives and an interdependency with practitioners and implementation partners to carry out high-quality agendas. Each unique lens is critical for long-term impact, regardless of positionality and perceived power.

2.1.3 Communities and Partners

Broadly defined, the term community includes all university-community partnerships with nonprofits, grassroots organizations, coalitions, neighborhoods, government agencies, or entrepreneurs and businesses. Partners can have relationships with the university in several ways and usually in multiple ways simultaneously. The relationships are means of building community capacity as a specific type of institutional resource investment. Community partners are invaluable stakeholders in the work of decolonizing higher education engagement ecosystems, providing
critical context, cultural wealth, and relevance. They often support programmatic efforts beyond new or startup catalytic resource models, disadvantaging preexisting or traditional initiatives for external philanthropic support or ongoing academic attention. Although there can be shared through participatory frameworks, the work of engaged institutions might occur based on assumptions and funding models with limited ability for democratized control.

2.1.4 The Region

Pitt is a state-related institution; therefore, individuals, families, and neighborhoods within the place-based strategies for university service-learning, outreach, and community engagement are stakeholders, whether they directly engage with the university. The allocation of public dollars occurs yearly in a political process of institutional advocacy, partisan politicking, and the prioritization of critical investment areas in the commonwealth. Because Pitt is an anchor institution, the economic and societal impacts of the people, programs, and purposes present opportunities for how its leaders wield the institution’s power, resources, and expertise.

Pittsburgh is a unique city, especially when considering a few key points. The city has a culture of considering deeply what is of a place, within a place, for a place, and what came before in places that have changed. An introduction between strangers includes challenging the pedigree and depth of an individual’s roots. Relationship-building occurs based on the degrees of separation between people and the spaces they can reference. City natives consider who (and where) could vouch for individuals or claim them as an important part of even the most glancing interpersonal interactions.

Pittsburgh is also a visible example of polarities. The city has a strong nonprofit and philanthropic industrial complex. Thousands of local organizations provide employment for
workers and receive millions of dollars for various causes. The largest philanthropic entity in the city, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, gave a record $372 million in grants and investments in 2021. According to the Pittsburgh Foundation, almost a third of Pittsburgh’s population lives in or near poverty. Equity remains elusive beyond the spending power of even some of the most powerful local organizations, including city government, school systems, and well-resourced philanthropic foundations. Similarly, the identity of Pitt as a large university with significant research activity could cause partners to perceive the institution as a resource-rich environment. However, in my professional experience, the faculty and staff who facilitate and strive to build and maintain community-engaged opportunities often do so with limited time, talent, or treasure. The ability of the institution’s members to move beyond traditional routines toward the social determinants of the residents could be the key to the institution’s capacity as a regional anchor and change agent.
3.0 Seeing the System: An Evaluation

Community-engaged practice is a nuanced body of boundary-spanning activities across diverse roles in higher education. CEPs have unique needs for professional conditions and capacity-building that might differ drastically from their institutions’ larger cultural and academic norms. Despite its identity as an engaged institution, Pitt lacks a formalized engagement architecture; however, there have been significant advances in elevating and shaping the community-engaged praxis over the past 5 years. Expecting CEPs to thrive in their roles without university-sponsored and facilitated opportunities to grow practice, knowledge of the field, and the institution’s history is a roadblock to a strong organization-wide praxis for community engagement at Pitt. Achieving success in my role requires accessing individuals who have served in similar capacities and institutional leaders (current and prior) who explained their strategic and immediate priorities. I also required a nationally based professional home to understand the field. I benefitted greatly from reporting to a scholar-practitioner who had significantly stewarded national practices and the institution’s strategies. With those key supports, I advanced and felt confident in communicating the functional and cultural impacts of engagement work and mentoring peers across the institution. Architecture that contributes to individual efficacy and impact could enable professionals in other roles to understand and bolster Pitt’s unique systemic conditions, design, and infrastructure.

There have been many challenges to my pursuit of a shared agenda and framework. Due to the unique positioning of their roles, CEPs might remain isolated in small teams dispersed through decentralized college and university structures. CEPs’ cultural and civic orientation often requires developing and articulating aims differently than traditional academic endeavors due to
the diversity of stakeholders involved and the pressure to co-create mutual benefits as a best practice. CEPs focus on concrete, less-academic interventions and supports to address the lived experiences of the communities with which they partner. For example, I respond to resident concerns as quickly as possible. Therefore, I must act both tactically and strategically when navigating the resources available to problem-solve, as I have less time to address the problem than the typical academic investigation cycle of a semester or more. CEPs often have more diverse identities than their institutions’ demographics and balance their practices with a positionality dually informed by their minoritized identities and the academy’s culturally racist and exclusionary norms. Embedding critical praxis as an institutional norm is best practice within the field of community engagement. In addition, critical praxis is a means of mitigating some of the challenges of working within racialized organizations that can both directly and indirectly (via conditions, infrastructure, and design) pose barriers between CEPs and liberatory consciousness.

Capacity-building support is a familiar process to the institution; however, that support remains focused on efforts to bolster the student learning experience. This type of framework can apply to andragogy (adult learning) and pedagogy, as it could be a means of broadening the university’s shared language of targeted OD. With the shift toward a more generative climate for engagement, Pitt CEPs can better understand their shared depth and breadth of work and develop a shared language for a community-engaged and critically informed praxis. As Figure 2 shows, Pitt’s capacity for engagement lies within the intersections of CEP ability, external wisdom, and institutional architecture. Investigating CEPs and institutional levers provided the opportunity to see and respond to critical context and increase positive impacts through partnerships.

Institutional structures for professional growth contributed to the scaffolding of this framework and included Pitt’s Faculty & Staff Development Program in the Human Resources
Department; the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and the Center for Teaching and Learning, which primarily provides support for faculty development. Outside of these professional teaching functions, providing institutional resources for organizational learning is primarily based on departmental discretionary budgets and siloed strategic investments. The systems lens is a useful strategy for re-situating the primary drivers of strategic institutional priorities and traditional academic hierarchies to better incorporate and be informed by CEP outputs and outcomes.

**Figure 2 Identifying HEI Capacity for Engagement**

In this study, the primary system driver intersecting with the problem of practice and research was the organizational capacity for change. This capacity was a combination of architecture or conditions, design and infrastructure, and dialogic development, or the ability to
orient toward relational decision-making and meaning-making schemas to better align with CEP contexts. Qualitative data on traditional academic hierarchies, strategic institutional priorities, and the emerging field of community-engaged practice provided support for the literature review and lines of inquiry to contribute to the field. Traditional academic hierarchies include the de facto language and scholarship of higher education. A quick search of the literature on high-impact practices, professional learning and development, and communities of practice within colleges and universities primarily found faculty- and student-centered research. Staff, community, or mixed audience-related interventions were the topics of studies largely limited to fields outside of professional learning (e.g., service-learning support or affinity group identity) outside of the traditional academy (e.g., adult basic education, lifelong learning, etc.), or more narrowly focused on a singular aspect of community-engaged practice (e.g., securing external funding).

Elevating CEP learning and development within the academy and broadening that growth to address the needs of a multitude of audiences, including CEPs and staff, would be a significant shift in how Pitt’s leaders invest in and communicate about investing in their workforce. Disrupting the current hierarchy could be a way to improve the efficacy of a broader coalition of roles. The absence of programmatic and functional leads (e.g., staff) within higher education scholarship has led many emergent scholars, including myself, to investigate the outsized role of CEPs in institutions due to their skills, functional roles, and blended cultural and civic identities and memberships. Breaking down this silo could provide a greater representation of the academy’s values for investing.

The most prestigious accreditation for engaged institutions, the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement requires rigorous self-study and a focus on the outcomes assessments of students, faculty, community, and institutional measures. The benefit of
the classification is an inquiry into the professional development support provided to faculty and staff in any category. This inquiry could be a justifiable opportunity to increase the institution’s investments in community-engaged practice to retain the accolade of institutional leadership. Changes to achieve this primary driver could result in increased offerings and cross-functional and inclusive touchpoints for professional growth for the community and the civic engagement of faculty, staff, students, and community partners.

Strategic institutional priorities indicate departmental aims, internal funding opportunities, the university’s midterm language, and many other critical artifacts and inspiration for collective action. I shaped my current sphere of practice based on the 2016–2020 Plan for Pitt, which indicates the university’s goal to strengthen communities and build foundational strength. Civic engagement and professional development opportunities are useful strategies for achieving those goals. Although it is helpful to align with strategic goals, the aspirational language shows the lack of strength in the current vision and resource alignment for the Plan for Pitt. Shifting institutional practices toward growth and dialogue could be a way to more meaningfully direct the institution’s potential impact on the region. Evaluating institutional conditions might also accelerate the shift from outputs to outcomes as the core metrics of community-engaged praxis with key artifacts, including the Pitt reclassification application for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2026.

The limitations of current emergent practices provide an opportunity to set national precedent. There has only recently been a national push for a central competency model, suggesting opportunities to credential the higher education community engagement field. Although the intersecting fields of community engagement (i.e., diversity, equity, and inclusion) date to the 1960s during the Civil Rights movement, community engagement as a contemporary
practice within higher education culture emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Over the past 20 years, university leaders have reinvigorated, reimagined, and expanded the community-serving missions of colleges and universities.

The term *community engagement professional* emerged about 5 years ago in the growing literature on the leadership and administration of institutionalization and the community engagement praxis. The field continues to shift and expand with the exploration and diffusion of additional practices, such as place-based initiatives and antiracist practices, incorporated into the traditional structures of HEIs. This inquiry and its central themes of OD, institutional architecture, personal narratives, and key artifacts could be useful resources for assessing and changing the management initiatives of similarly positioned HEIs.
4.0 Review of Supporting Knowledge

There are many intersections of OD and organizational praxis. HEIs had different modalities for and conditions of learning and development. Traditionally, the academy focused on pedagogical frameworks rather than systems-level considerations of how to remain an agile and consciously learning organization. With this dissertation in practice, I sought extant literature on the key aspects of organizational architecture and development related to anchor and engagement strategies. Increasingly, HEI leaders have begun embedding engagement priorities within all aspects of institutional operations instead of positioning them as part of a triad with teaching and research. Engagement scholars have identified the Kellogg Commission (1996–2000) and the Wingspread Declaration on Civic Engagement (1999) as the key guidelines for shifting the role and responsibilities of HEIs within society. Brinkley et al. (2012) elaborated,

In its 1999 report, the Kellogg Commission proposed a new way of thinking about the university’s role in the community. While traditional approaches entailed a unilateral transmission of expertise from universities to communities (embodied in words like “service” and “outreach”), the new movement called for a reciprocal partnership, one that came to be defined as “engagement.” (p. 9)

A catalyst of the Kellogg Commission was the collective institutional, cultural, technical, and practical knowledge of the practitioners who facilitated community engagement on behalf of HEIs. Despite incorporating the term engagement into strategic plans, mission statements, and organizational structures, outreach and engagement activities are not fully institutionalized or regarded as highly as other university missions (Franz et al., 2012, p. 29).
Community engagement within HEI contexts is still an emerging and expanding field; however, work to support practitioners often connects to the competencies linked to the sector (Brown & Moore, 2019; Dostilio, 2017; Dostilio & Welch, 2019). Investing in employees and their civic agency (Boyte, 2009) is an institutional opportunity interwoven with developing and advancing an engagement praxis. An engagement praxis is one of many processes HEI leaders can use to identify and assess their progress in meeting their institution’s engaged missions. Furco (2010) noted, “Building on the lessons learned from the previous decade’s campus/community partnership challenges and failures, this new philosophy focused on promoting campuses that were more fully and more genuinely engaged with the societal issues of the day” (p. 380). Organized communities are dialogic OD practices providing space to diffuse collaborative, learner-oriented practices throughout HEIs. Decentering an institutional voice to elevate networking and cross-disciplinary efforts and frameworks is a strategy for decolonizing learning, power, and community efficacy in ways that align with the best practices for ethical engagement. Decentering institutional and academic voices is a way to provide space for a grassroots understanding of community wealth to more holistically account for the varying pathways of knowledge creation. In a powerful exploration of civic agency, Boyte (2009) examined the complex interconnections between the societal pressure to assume positions of expertise and exclusion to a deficit:

Dominant models of knowledge making undercut the moral and civic authority of forms of knowledge that are not academic—wisdom passed down by cultural elders, spiritual insight, local and craft knowledge, the common sense of a community about raising children. As they do so, they also undermine the confidence, standing, and authority of everyday citizens without degrees and formally credentialed expertise. (p. 2)
Boyte (2009) reinforced the collective power of individuals committed to personalizing and contextualizing bridges to the otherwise distanced priorities of HEIs. CEPs play a distinct role in fulfilling Post et al.’s (2016) call for HEI leaders to understand and enact engagement not as a product or an outcome but as a sustainable process for building relationships with/in the community served by a particular institution” (Brown & Moore, 2019, pp. 5–6). The personal identities, the culture of deep care and servant leadership, and extended civic networks of CEPs enable make them unique facilitators of engagement at Pitt. Farner (2019) described CEPS as Community-based problem solvers, engagement champions, and internal engagement advocates who exercised deep listening; solution-focused, big-picture thinking; and a willingness to make the hierarchical boundaries of the institution more permeable, encouraging a leadership culture of openness, accessibility, and approachability. (p. 150)

Without naming the more recent understanding of OD and architecture in the same ways, scholars of engagement and service-learning have largely supported each key concept of these intersecting fields that, together, comprise a cohesive and engaged campus identity. Advancing and assessing a praxis of making the most of the unique engaged identity of an institution could mitigate the sustainability lost in engagement staff attrition and mobility.

Developing the community engagement praxis in the specific context of this study occurred with a “bidirectional, constructivist paradigm of systematic change through social learning comprising an active network of experiences and interactions” (Farner, 2019, p. 149). Those experiences and interactions occur across function, role, and identity within and adjacent to HEIs in what Boyte (2009) defined as a civic agency approach:
A civic agency approach is built through what we call public work, based on a sense of the citizen as a cocreator of a democratic way of life and a view that emphasizes politics’ productive as well as participatory and distributive aspects. (p. 1)

Civic purpose fulfillment is a goal ingrained in the core work of the academy and higher education (Furco, 2010). The foundational mission of HEIs suggests that an engagement agenda “primarily benefits the local community or society at large, but also [is] an essential component for the academy’s survival” (p. 380). CEP development indicates the capacity of the institutional praxis to advance the community-engagement architecture and provide adaptive opportunities responsive and relevant to noninstitutional stakeholders. Change management in large organizations is a nuanced process. Many authors have focused on CEP’s orientation and ability to address flexible, multiple purposes for relational goals. Brown and Moore (2019) stated,

CEPs are conveners, facilitators, and organizers who take a long view of the change-oriented goals of community engagement. They invite others—to invest with them in the short-term steps of a messy and meticulous process even as they work for long-term change. (p. 6)

Fostering organizational aptitude for community-engaged innovation within HEIs is possible through interdisciplinary change agendas that connect to community voices and opportunities. HEI agenda implementation tends to occur through overlapping networks and coalitions, the members of which handle the outreach, engagement, and services of engaged campuses and orient colleagues in internal and external communities. Boyte (2009) observed, “Seeing institutions as communities, building public relationships, undertaking intentional changes in their cultures to make them more public, and thinking in political terms, are largely
foreign to academic and professional organizations” (p. 27). There can be communities of place, circumstances, interest, and identity, and those in the CEP community have a natural orientation to unite for mutual support.

Goodyear (2019) said, “There is now an extensive history of networked professional learning, stretching back from the late 1980s to the early 1990s” (p. 253). Goodyear connected these activities with the improvement of “sense making systems and platforms for action” (p. 253). Torres et al. (2013) suggested that “change agents—individuals who negotiate power, information, and relationships—are needed to facilitate institutionalization” (p. 4). Boundary spanners are change agents uniquely positioned to address adaptive challenges because they “negotiate the wants and needs of parties involved in the process of creating and disseminating knowledge” (Hutchinson & Huberman, 1993, p. 79, as cited in Farner, 2019, p. 148). The semistructured interviews in this study showed that managing change priorities, even ones with tension or outright polarity, is a skill that CEPs acquire with strong internal access and relationships or resources, such as warm external connections and critical contexts for culture and orientation. The presence of strong internal access and relationships and resources can magnify self-efficacy and minimize disconnect. This study addressed the integral connections between the capacity for change, CEPs as adaptive tools within organizations, and the power of staff-centered learning and development.

I analyzed the literature on professional learning at HEIs using a lens centered on faculty, especially related to the teaching function of institutions. Cox (2001) remarked that faculty development that connects faculty more closely to the basic aims of the institution can help transform institutions of higher education into learning organizations. Senge (1990) described a learning organization as one that more closely links its members to its broader mission, goals, and challenges” (Brancato, 2003, p. 62).
HEIs early in the process of institutionalizing engagement tend to have primarily exploratory organizational learning and development activities for practitioners that remain separate from strategic institutional structures for investment and the best practices for adult education and training. The entire campus community is vital to the institutionalization of engagement (Brinkley et al., 2012); however, most scholars have failed to isolate CEPs in the boundary-spanning positions responsible for implementation. Franz et al. (2012) remarked,

Fostering leadership commitment requires the president and provost to develop a network of leaders across institutions that are able to articulate the vision, mission, and strategy of engagement and engaged scholarship (Childers et al., 2002). Creating and fostering a network of leaders with these competencies for engagement becomes a major mechanism of organizational change. (p. 30)

Like the members of other critical learning community networks at HEIs, CEPs require intentional professional growth and connection. Franz (2014) said,

Organizations interested in measuring and articulating the value of engagement work need to support professional development and other learning supports for university faculty and staff and community partners. Opportunities should build awareness and skills to measure the economic, environmental, and social value of engagement. (p. 12)

CEPs are unique, bridging communities of membership and centering the dispositions of collaborative practice. “Because one’s identity represents the juxtaposition of personal experience with cultural forms and social relations” (Holland et al., 1998), it is an appropriate way to think about how learning occurs as one participates in the community. Holland et al. (1998) stated, “Identities are lived in and through activity and so must be conceptualized as they develop in social
practice” (p. 5, as cited in Blanton & Stylianou, 2009). In this study, I analyzed the CEPs as practitioner-learners and as teachers of institutional change and learning who inform larger strategic agendas.

Situating CEP learning as critical to system design, infrastructure, and application is an area of opportunity for engagement researchers, despite being inherently “baked into” the understanding of how organizations change through conversance with their leading edges. Boyte (2009) stated, “Phrased in the language of complex adaptive systems, their successes in discovering and developing public talent provide examples of multiplier effects when self-directing and interacting agents adapt to and learn from engagement with their environments and each other” (pp. 17–18). Scholars have broadly attempted to answer the who, what, when, where, and why questions about higher education CEPs. However, researchers have largely explored how by conducting experiments and case studies instead of expanding the scope of internal organizational change frameworks in HEIs. Farner (2019) is a prominent author who connected individual identity and activity to collective practice. According to Farner, “Identifying the activities of boundary spanners at the individual level is important for operationalizing the institutionalization process; at the organizational level, understanding how separate institutional factors come together to affect this process is critical” (p. 148).

I built on Farner’s (2019) work by exploring the institutionalization of engagement and boundary-spanning activities and the critical aspects of OD and participation to advance the CEP praxis outside of an understanding of their specific competencies. Functionally, this study showed the importance of considering CEP voices and activities as key contributors to self-assessments and the institution’s advancement of a larger strategic engagement architecture. I borrowed this
concept from learning and development and organizational behavior theories that present alignment as an organizational strategy for reallocating resources and conditions for practice.

Community engagement is a core supportive resource that provides the opportunity to bring together data, storytellers, and lived experiences to focus on institutional values in action. Franz (2014) noted, “In the last decade, stakeholders, especially elected officials, have come to expect Extension to articulate how engagement with communities changes economic, environmental, and social conditions” (p. 8). With a practitioner lens, HEI leaders can develop performative metrics and nonperformative cultural norms to mitigate HEIs’ tendency to shift from adaptive practice to technical reporting to meet nontransformative PR goals. In my early discovery, the aspects of dialogic OD that intersect most closely with the potential for HEIs to advance societal impact are the most critical and liberatory spaces of their persona as well as analyzing frameworks.

Critical or reflexive routines are common topics in the scholarship of engagement. From the Marxist underpinnings (Freire, 1993) of liberatory practitioners in the 1970s to the corporate language of cultural competency (McReynolds & Shields, 2015), critical commitments are now prevalent in the field, leading to national learning communities such as the Place-Based Justice Network. Critical commitments are the guiding principles of key organizations such as the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement. Critical praxis is an increasingly visible concept within the academy due to the evolution of reflective practices and feminist, race-conscious, and decolonial educational philosophies (Atallah et al., 2021; Dean et al., 2019; Jacob et al., 2015; Mahon et al., 2019; Plaxton-Moore, 2021; Seedat, 2012; Stone, 2018; Tryon & Madden, 2019). Critical self-analysis of engagement architecture
facilitates dialogic organizational routines that enable HEI leaders to center their universities as learners and stakeholders within larger societal systems.

Bushe and Marshak (2014) championed dialogic OD practices, premises, and mindsets within organizations, calling for active, ongoing processes of building organizational architecture that align with the experiences and beliefs of the people within the systems. The experiences and beliefs of the people within the system indicate the organization’s capacity for self-literacy and how critical information and practices can align with institutional decoding, meaning-making, analyzing, persona, and use of engagement architecture (Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2013). Dialogic OD interventions require the underlying processes of narrative and discourse, emergence, and generativity (Bushe & Marshak, 2014). These processes aligned with my goals for CEP involvement in this research through their connection to a shared professional identity, the field at large, and the specific conditions of praxis at Pitt. An assumption is that generativity is embedded within social, human-centered systems. This evaluative analysis was a means of interrogating and making that assumption explicit as part of the research inquiry and target protocols.
5.0 Data Sources and Methods

The research findings were distributed across three modalities of qualitative analysis. Each method addressed contextual norms for CEPs, motivators of community-engaged practice, navigational support for institutional resources, intersectional practitioner identities, and self-efficacy beliefs. Table 1 shows the various data sources, measures, and timeline for the collection and analysis presented in this chapter.

Improving the university engagement architecture for CEPs will result in more impactful outcome alignment and reporting, an increased ability to integrate community priorities into institutional planning, and the opportunity to advance a differentiating identity within the higher education markets as it relates to Pitt’s publicly engaged anchor mission. This inquiry also focused on the capacity of Pitt’s leaders to turn the institution toward a dialogic OD model with an architectural approach. According to the architectural approach, the design, infrastructure, and conditions are critical aspects of engagement praxis.

Dialogic OD methods require active and open processes of change. Ongoing opportunities to interrogate and collectively process engagement practices align with relationship-driven CEPs. This qualitative inquiry was a means of assessing institutional capacity as visible and accessible engagement architecture. I collected CEP narratives and institutional artifacts to identify persistent themes in praxis, which served as frames for institutional investments and strategies. Breaking the routines within academia to embed critical dispositions at Pitt could also create change among similarly positioned anchors and further opportunities to engage the drivers of inequity directly.
Table 1 Data Source Table

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Potential Measures</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artifact analysis</td>
<td>Visibility of public communications that feature aspects of engagement architecture</td>
<td>Artifacts targeted for inclusion created: September 2019 – March 2022</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Analysis: March 2022 – June 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey:</td>
<td>Qualitative analysis of CEP knowledge &amp; beliefs, capacity, and connectedness</td>
<td>Pre-surveys deployed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>September 2019 – March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Qualitative exploration of aspects of engagement architecture</td>
<td>Identify participants from members of ECOP group:</td>
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<tr>
<td>interviews:</td>
<td></td>
<td>February 2022</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Interviews: March 2022 – June 2022</td>
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I sought to understand the system by surveying CEPs and the internal leaders responsible for significant institutional outputs and outcomes of engagement, tracking the usage of key CEP resources, and gathering detailed input from a cohort of CEPs. The collected data underwent simple quantitative tracking and qualitative analysis for knowledge, skills, orientation, attitudes, perceptions, and keywords. Data collection from the stakeholders consisted of observing participation and access, reviewing current and future institutional artifacts, and interviewing key stakeholders.
I engaged key themes within the scholarship on CEP competency models, the institutionalization of community engagement, professional training and development within higher education contexts, and OD. The CEPs answered questions about university-sponsored or facilitated connections and resource access within and across departments and disciplines and their alignment to professional affinity or identity. I also probed the CEPs’ connections to colleagues and the macro-level institutional engagement praxis.

5.1 Preexisting Data and Analysis – CEP Survey

The study included 2019 preliminary data collected from the ECOP group early in its formation. I supplemented the data with survey responses from the 2021–2022 academic year and surveys and interviews from March 2022–June 2022. Statistical analysis of multiple-choice responses showed that CEPs worked on teams and engaged several resources for their professional learning with peers, including online media and publicly accessible published resources. Only one CEP explicitly cited the institution as a capacity-building resource. Many of the CEPs referred to institutional expectations and offerings in their responses to the reasons for engaging in a network of practice. This finding indicates the need to develop interventions for internal cohort models for increased engagement within and across teamed structures. Pitt’s CEPs highly valued multimedia and online resources. I consider that finding reaffirming, as I used multimedia and online resources to onboard myself to the national field and familiarize myself with the language of higher education civic and community engagement. The participants’ responses will be the data used to design the Year 2 survey instrument and conduct further research on the activities beneficial for practice. Data analysis of presurvey responses indicated critical topics and subtopics related to the
following questions in the 2019–2020 survey (N = 73). The appendix contains the full presurvey analysis.

- Please describe how you facilitate your department’s engagement in the community.
- What are you hoping to gain by participating in the engagement community of practice?

Using Qualtrics, I performed text IQ analysis of open-ended responses to the following questions: “Please describe how you facilitate your department/unit’s engagement in the community” and “What are you hoping to gain from participating in the community of practice?” Text IQ was the function used to assign themes to specific text and phrase indicators. The software suggested themes from topic libraries based on the principal orientation of the uploaded responses. For this analysis, text IQ suggested some business-oriented libraries appropriate for analyzing content on professional roles and aspirations. Parent topics are guiding themes that include several associated subcodes or themes. I filtered the responses to identify several parent topics and keywords and categorize the content. The topic libraries chosen within Qualtrics were professional service providers, customer care, and employee experience. Parent topics, subtopics, and hyper-specific queries of keywords produced the final topic counts for each category, with all prominent themes across survey responses considered. The topics reflected how the Pitt CEPs engaged and sought participation in the ECOP network.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent topic themes</th>
<th>Specific subattributes</th>
<th>Examples and quotes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People attributes</td>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td>“Our office seeks to support needs identified within the community and to strengthen efforts to build leadership and shared power within communities, so decisions are made by those who are most impacted by them.”</td>
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<td>• Friendliness</td>
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<td>People and teams</td>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
<td>“I’m hoping to strengthen connections between students and the broader community and create meaningful and memorable expressions of collaboration”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Business opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Challenges</td>
<td>“When diverse people come together through CoP, there is the opportunity to share ideas, processes, and perspectives. We can be challenged to reflect on our programs and find new ways to improve them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Developing relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o General collaboration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Teamwork</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coworkers and teams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Diversity</td>
<td>“Inspiration from the work my colleagues are doing. Connecting with others (on and off campus) to further this work.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance and development, engagement</td>
<td>• General expertise</td>
<td>“Very interested in learning more about best practices, meeting other community engagement colleagues at Pitt, and identifying new resources to help me enhance my department’s community engagement efforts and better meet the needs of our audiences.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Industry experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Career growth</td>
<td>“Better understanding of Community Engagement. Exposure to best practices.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Growth and development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Motivated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workload and work-life balance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent topic themes</td>
<td>Specific subattributes</td>
<td>Examples and quotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>• Budget</td>
<td>“Support is provided at the foundation level through strategic planning and financial allocation and grant writing.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• It and systems</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Staffing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tools and resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execution</td>
<td>• Delivery</td>
<td>“We try to create spaces that feels like a range of people can get together in one room and co-teach and co-learn to make research a more thorough function.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Innovation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Processes and procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliverables and products</td>
<td>• Benefits realization</td>
<td>By engaging…students cultivate relationships within our greater community, complement classroom learning experiences, and create foundations for a lifelong commitment to service.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Deadlines and timing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• General deliverables</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Impact</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering</td>
<td>• Partner communication</td>
<td>“Partners are compensated for their contributions of time, expertise, and leadership.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Partner experience</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Partner service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service provision</td>
<td>• Data and analytics</td>
<td>“Basically, I try to build bridges, encourage agency and voice, and common good”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Expertise</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• General service</td>
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<td>• Methodology</td>
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<td>• Problem solving</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Resource allocation</td>
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<td>• Training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Legal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to feedback/leadership</td>
<td>• Organization feedback</td>
<td>“To join a think tank of professionals that is both critically thinks at a 10,000 ft level while practically moves at a 10 ft level as well.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Manager</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Trust and care</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Vision and strategy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Human related feedback (customer focus, empathy, knowledge, problem solving)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Organization feedback – ease of process</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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### 5.2 Semistructured Interviews

10 CEPs at Pitt received an invitation to participate, and six participated in semistructured interviews for this study. I recruited the CEPs from the engagement community of practice and engaged academic units with public community-engaged scholarship that embedded staff roles as functional managers or leads. The participants’ roles included fostering the engagement of the following audiences: students, alumni, local families with elementary-aged youth, residents within a particular Zip Code, and a wide array of partners seeking academic and cocurricular partnerships. The participants’ length of tenure within the institution ranged from 18 months to more than 15 years. One limitation of this study was none of the responding CEPs identified as male. Although female and femme beliefs and approaches align with my positionality, I sought to engage a heterogeneous group of participants regarding gender identity. The participants’ titles ranged from coordinator to director. The participants comprised professionals with the frontline responsibility of community engagement and those who managed teams to facilitate community-engaged praxis on behalf of Pitt.

An interview protocol with six sets of open-ended questions resulted in 16 unique but interrelated responses per interview and a smaller set of responses to the final question, “Is there anything else you’d like to share?” The participants’ responses varied widely but primarily aligned with the following high-level content areas:

- CEP knowledge and beliefs regarding engagement architecture
- CEP efficacy (ability to advance organization and community priorities)
- CEP connectedness to shared professional identity and institutional praxis
After manually coding the transcripts, I found 12 primary codes across all 100 responses that served to inform the themes. Upon further analysis, I increased the 12 primary codes to 17 more nuanced guiding themes of the CEPs’ responses. The hierarchical visualization (see Figure 3) shows the prominence of the codes and subcodes across all responses. In the hierarchy chart, each code’s size and order correlate to the code’s relative prominence across all responses. When relevant, I coded the phrases across all intersectional themes instead of limiting them to a primary or singular code. I created an additional visualization to present the same themes across the responses of each CEPs to isolate connections and correlations.

![Figure 3 Response Theme Hierarchy](image-url)
5.3 Artifact Analysis

The data analysis occurred to assess if the institutional priorities of the artifacts aligned with any of the architectural components of the infrastructure, design, and conditions of the engagement praxis. I analyzed the first 12 artifacts and websites found through searches, focusing on the most visible artifacts a CEP might encounter or receive as part of onboarding or ongoing professional learning. Paired with the CEPs’ personal narratives, the qualitative method provided the opportunity to comprehensively assess the primary inquiry questions, which were:

- What are the primary organizational conditions that inform CEP professional identity and efficacy?
- What is the institutional infrastructure most likely to advance a cohesive engagement agenda?
- What aspects of the design of Pitt’s engagement praxis are most accessible to CEPs?
- What aspects of the institutional architecture serve as limiting factors for CEP efficacy?

Artifacts are connective and descriptive expressions of institutional engagement architecture. As readily accessible tools, artifacts can be critical antecedents and comprehensive progress markers for the institutionalization of engagement. Artifact analysis focuses on the accessibility (visibility and content clarity) and definitions of and connections to architecture indicators. The artifacts that underwent analysis were the online landing pages for the following resources:

1. Specific institutional resources mentioned in interviews
2. The University of Pittsburgh strategic plan (Plan for Pitt)
3. The Office of Engagement and Community Affairs (ECA)
4. The offices and websites referenced in key ECA artifacts
5. Searches for the following combination of words on Google (community and engagement and University and Pittsburgh), unique from the above pages

With a simple rubric, I assessed each artifact’s and website’s institutional capacity for the dialogic OD methods that could contribute to the engagement architecture. In developing a response for each aspect of institutional architecture, I reported whether there was evidence of content on climate, culture, behaviors, strategies, systems, measurements, rewards, roles, accountabilities, or interlinkages. I isolated and set aside for further analysis any artifacts directed to internal and external audiences (mentioned by the CEPs) that included all aspects of the architectural components of engagement. As indicated in Chapter 6.0, high-quality artifacts are the key interlinkages between the system components of the described model of OD. I identified the artifacts useful for CEPs (via visibility and accessibility) across architectural components as supportive bridges across the full frame of change and discourse.
6.0 Findings

The data analysis resulted in several themes for each method of inquiry. These themes had significant interdependencies that began to shape an institutional architecture assembled from both a practitioner and institutional lens. The CEP narratives showed the connection between accessibility and intentional consideration and practice and efficacy. The participating CEPs related institutional architecture that reflected praxis firmly “in process” as a priority rapidly centralized and resourced over the last 3 to 5 years. Despite the increasing number of assets across the engagement’s design, conditions, and infrastructure, the CEPs responsible for integrating engaged programming and scholarship within the preexisting frameworks of their departments or discipline reported barriers to full participation. The ability to engage in self-directed or intrinsically aligned activities appeared to be a protective factor for CEP efficacy. The CEPs who were the most confident in their connection to institutional architecture and the field of engagement shared examples of their ability to present authentic, value-oriented practices with supportive relationships.

6.1 Data Sources

6.1.1 CEP Survey

When asked about capacity-building at the institution, the CEPs reported access to decision-makers, skill-building outside of the competencies associated with community
engagement, and access to professional development funds to attend external opportunities as the primary investment strategies. The strategies showed an internal engagement architecture with limited efficacy and reach. Broad, competitive opportunities to receive internal support and resources comprised all but one of the institution’s internal funding processes accessible through artifact analysis. Section 3 presents this finding in greater detail. The CEPs also reported receiving limited guidance for engagement strategies and outcomes outside of pedagogy and relying on the interest of partners and internal collaborators to create and advance new ideas. A quote characteristic of many of the survey responses received was, “[I hope to gain a] greater understanding of what is currently happening across the University. Best practices and opportunities to work as an interdisciplinary team.” For the open-ended questions, the CEPs reported their desire to connect to one another, advance their understanding of the field, learn about specific institutional priorities, and receive guidance. The participants expounded on those desires in the semistructured interviews.

The participating CEPs cited professional growth as integral to relationship-building and management. The CEPs referenced their natural inclination toward individuals, bodies of work, and organizations complimentary to their practice. This finding aligned with my sense that the institution’s current state of praxis is a grassroots system of relationships and knowledge that can shift drastically as the people who hold critical roles transition in or out of the system. Another CEP wrote, “[I hope to gain a] better understanding of community engagement. Exposure to best practices. Inspiration from the work my colleagues are doing. Connecting with others (on and off campus) to further this work.” Even within spaces of practice, multiple CEPs characterized efforts as emergent, changing, or in need of strategic support. The CEPs also mentioned capacity concerns, such as, “I am looking to learn more regarding strategies and how to do more with little
staff ability to take it on.” The CEP position has a wide array of functional roles within the university. Therefore, CEPs embody the reality that flexible constructs and understandings of “community” work connect through intergroup processes.

The CEPs reported an affinity for connective spaces and described opportunities to receive strategic guidance as key to their growth and success. One CEP survey response of CEP praxis goals reflected the themes present throughout many narratives: “When diverse people come together through CoP [conditions of practice], there is the opportunity to share ideas, processes, and perspectives. We can be challenged to reflect on our programs and find new ways to improve them.” The CEPs also affirmed CEP values and the relational orientation of engagement as a field. The CEPs’ responses on the network survey were evenly distributed across the institution as individual practitioners and teams of engagement collaborators. The institutions should have a stable core engagement infrastructure. However, the varied CEP functions and placement reported in the surveys suggest that the adaptive design frameworks and schemas provide interconnected but not interdependent artifact supports.

The point of clarification between interconnection (or conversancy) and interdependency is that some artifacts might have engagement fundamentals, language, and primary competencies across CEPs. However, they did not require cross-institutional processes to align to prescriptive models of staffing, interlinkages, or accountabilities that would require more complicated models of shared governance. The CEPs’ requests for personalized or contextualized support as core infrastructure aligned with statements from the 2019–2022 data collection. Finally, the conditions of praxis for CEPs mirrored those of the institution, indicating that unit- or department-level climate, culture, and behaviors significantly impact CEP knowledge and beliefs, efficacy, and connectedness. This finding indicates that centralized conditions guidance could be a longer-term
goal accomplished in partnership with the academic and operational leaders responsible for engagement activities. One CEP responded, “I’m looking to find my people! I am so excited to learn how we grow together and support each other.” The responses showed the presence of informal schemas of conditions indicating the desire to maintain climate, culture, and behaviors of mutual support outside of the formalized conditions and expectations of individual units.

The data collection showed an institution whose members struggle with the polarities of perceived largess and functional scarcity regarding the availability of concrete inputs for professional practice for its workforce. There has been continuous institutionalization of CEP investments through a collective of roles and broad strengths across an interdisciplinary body of practice and scholarship. As a result, Pitt is a uniquely positioned and engaged anchor institution.

6.1.2 Interviews

The participating CEPs processed their understanding of their professional knowledge, beliefs, and capacity and connected primarily through relationships (internal and external). The participants also discussed the values of engagement practices, the tensions of navigating engagement roles and responsibilities, and the disconnect that results in limited efficacy and strategic alignment.

6.1.2.1 Interview Theme 1: Relationships

Relationships emerged as a significant theme in the CEPs’ interviews. The CEPs valued and used relationships in several ways, as shown with direct quotes. Almost all interview participants mentioned relationships and their importance as a core CEP tool, with their responses overlapping with many other guiding themes. One CEP said,
I think meeting and talking to people who are doing this work has also been really important to me. Seeing this work done in different cities and seeing the nuances and how it’s different everywhere that you go is also something that’s been important to me.

Individuals within and outside the organization contribute to CEPs’ understanding of the field overall and their specific roles and functions. In this study, the CEPs described the active process of enabling themselves to see and discover across groups through relationships. One CEP said, “Personal experiences and networking and learning from like other people in the profession are what helps me to grow and develop the most. When I get that opportunity, that’s when I feel like I’ve learned the most.” This CEP described that relationships aligned to a preferred professional learning style. Sometimes, the CEPs liked to build relationships for relationships’ sake. One participant said, “[I like] having conversations with people that may not really be related to specific outcomes or projects at all because having a strong relationship with someone is really important.” Limited relationships resulted in limited CEP praxis. Another participant responded, I just would like to know more sometimes. I’m like, “Oh, wait, I didn’t know that existed and it sounds really cool.” I think that in [my unit], we [should] kind of prioritize those things more because we’re kind of doing our own thing.”

This CEP expressed feeling disconnected from important and beneficial information.

The CEPs described internal relationships as an opportunity to receive mentorship, receive and process institutional histories, advance a sense of belonging and professional home, advance further programmatic reach and coordination, and mitigate some of the polarities between traditional academic norms and engagement praxis. Internal relationships provide an opportunity to continue oral histories of the institution’s relationships with various communities, compare
mutual relationships, and troubleshoot partnerships. One CEP perceived professional peer relationships as the key to development and said, “I think being able to hear stories from other folks and see what other folks were doing and how they were going about it was really good, as far as [for] my personal growth and professional growth.”

Relationships support individual goals and build a strong network of individuals with a highly relational orientation. The CEPs in this study discussed relying on colleagues in an inclusive affinity network with shared values and priorities. The conditions within the engagement architecture appeared to have a climate of helping. One CEP said, “We do have a sense of community. When people need assistance or help with something, there’s someone to reach out to you. I think Pitt has fostered that as well.” This CEP also mentioned initiating and responding to requests for help to build positive professional relationships.

However, the CEPs who reported underdeveloped or absent internal relationships were more likely to report feeling disconnected from the national field and local institutional strategies and resources. One CEP said,

A lot of the time, it feels like even though [I’m in] a part of a university that has so many resources, [I] am sometimes still limited or pigeonholed in what I could do because I only have so many connections and so many channels of communication.

This CEP’s statement regarding limited self-efficacy indicates a lack of internal professional relationships and access. A practitioner shared the following as an asset-oriented response to professional learning: “Without the ability to work with some of these other folks, I don’t think I’d be as far as I am or have as much of an understanding with community.”
High-quality external relationships show the interconnectedness of community wisdom and guide the engagement praxis, reorienting the academy toward relevant priorities, and providing spaces of inclusion and accommodation for CEPs. One CEP in this study said, “We have an advisory council that is a great guide [that] heavily impacts the methods in which we do things and how we implement things. [The council is a] direct community voice.” The participants provided numerous examples of shared and distributed governance and decision-making processes that allowed those responsible for institutional structures to assign value to external perspectives. In this way, the external relationships were means of guiding and reaffirming the work of CEPs through shared governance structures and informal advocacy for investment. The CEPs expressed high regard for external relationships. One said, “I realized that I knew so many people there, and [the] people knew me and were excited to see me. For me, that was a real accomplishment.”

Intergroup inclusion, accessibility, and shared frameworks or language appeared to be affirming indicators of the strength of relationships for the CEPs. The partners welcomed CEPs in community spaces, highlighted their blended identities across personal and professional spheres, and provided critical outlets for the academy’s programs and scholarship. However, external relationships that are not continuously cultivated tend to have diminishing quality. One CEP said,

We’re not as in tune [with a certain partner] with everything going on, but there have been lots of efforts to connect us further, so I don’t want to give that indication. It’s just not a regular occurrence other than some intentional efforts to connect us.

6.1.2.2 Interview Theme 2: Values of Community Engagement

The theme of values of community engagement emerged from all the CEP responses as foundational for relationship and practice. The CEPs reported that values and value statements
enabled the CEPs to identify one another and connect, set norms for collaborators across the institution, and build bridges between their individual goals and the institutional architecture. The CEPs used their values to uplift their connections to the field and their positions. The values were also catalysts of hope when navigating unclear or difficult circumstances with partners and colleagues. The members of one department chose to take on the role of active learners, and a CEP from this department shared the success of assigning a high value to learning:

[We’re] always encouraging not just [the] feedback loop but that sense-of-humility culture as well. We approach our work with a sense of do no harm and high regard [for the] complex narratives of [the] community. It’s a supportive environment.

Even when unsure of the pathway forward, commitment is an important consideration for practice. One CEP said,

If you say that you’re gonna do something for somebody, you do it, or you do it to the best of your ability. I’ve learned early on that despite how much I may want to, I can’t make promises because not everything is in my hands or my control. When you drop the ball, people notice, or if you don’t follow through, people notice, and that kind of fractures the trust that’s been built.

Another CEP shared a similar sentiment but attached the importance of values to institutional priorities, saying, “I think that accountability is really important to Pitt and the community work that we do. I think, in a lot of ways, I take accountability really seriously.”

The values and cultural orientation of the CEPs’ individual units and close collaborators indicated the conditions of practice for the study’s CEPs. The CEPs who reported limited connectedness in the form of relationships also referenced the need for support and a better
understanding of how the values and orientation of the engagement praxis could reinforce their unique role and responsibilities. The CEPs used their values to bolster relationships, set expectations for collaborations, and connect with colleagues in varying levels of practice. Although this was not a causal relationship, the results suggest that CEP units with strong values and expectations have CEPs with higher self-efficacy.

6.1.2.3 Interview Theme 3: Tensions, Polarities, and Conflict Management

In the data analysis, I found several participant responses that showed how the CEPs acted as internal agitators, took on functions beyond their job descriptions, and served the institution by quietly protecting the long-term outlook of institutional praxis in ways their peers did not. The CEPs occupied blended spaces and assumed functions requiring them to wield pieces of their personal identity and civic lives to succeed. The work of community partnership rarely occurs or remains limited to 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Therefore, the CEPs in this study reported working into the off-hours to continue relationship maintenance and network-building. One CEP said, “We stand ready to defend the decisions of leadership or to at least articulate the decisions of leadership to our [community] and have those conversations while still investing in that community-building [and] focusing on their needs.” Sometimes the CEPs’ work required taking on the responsibility of translating the institutional priorities and decisions that were barriers to liberatory praxis. One CEP said,

I think that those kinds of spaces have been really important for me, [as well as] thinking about how I show up [for] the work. Being ready to have uncomfortable conversations and being able to sit in the discomfort, I think, [are] really important when you’re talking about [how] systems of oppression come together, and [you have to] be honest about where you’re both coming from.
Other times, the participants felt a conflicting sense of accountability to protect and serve their valued partners over accommodating colleagues who did not appear to prioritize maintaining long-term relationships. One CEP said, “There’s more attention [on] what we could potentially do as an institution [instead of] what we do as an institution.” The CEPs also looked for the institution’s leaders to fully realize the university’s aspired ideals by pushing progressive, ethical agendas that might not have integrated with the broader identity of Pitt as a university with a high level of research activity and high-attainment academic persona.

CEPs’ personal and professional integrity intersects with institutional realities and can result in either growth or ongoing friction. The participating CEPs with high relationship accessibility were able to communicate a nuanced approach to polarities in practice for continuous community-building. The participants often shared experiences that caused dissonance between aspirations and institutional action. This finding indicates that relationships and grounding values are the foundation of change capacity.

6.1.2.4 Interview Theme 4: Disconnect From Institutional Strategy and Supports

One participant said, “I know there are meetings that I’m not a part of. I think that there are strategies that different offices have [that are] kind of put in place and guiding the overall vision of community engagement at Pitt.” This quote showed one of the challenges the Pitt CEPs experienced as part of a large and decentralized system. Varying capacity for the engagement function across units, limited access, and few opportunities to unpack can result in a limited engagement architecture for decision-makers and internal leaders. One CEP said, “When we’re talking about community engagement, it can feel very dispersed and sort of maybe lacking a structure. Sometimes, [the] impact isn’t as clear from an institutional standpoint as it could be.”
Many CEPs in this study operated in the space of intergroup membership, which could result in limited direct support for goals for external or blended constituencies.

Contextualized practice can only occur within an intentional community of active learning spaces. CEPs who inherit professional priorities and norms without context find themselves marginalized, unable to reflect on how they contribute to shared goals and strategies. They could lack awareness of those goals and strategies entirely. One CEP said,

I do feel like Pitt needs to kind of do better, in general, with people who aren’t directors and kind of find more ways to [do better]. I kind of hear things through the trickle-down system. I think it would be nice if there were greater opportunities for people who were kind of not as higher up.

Hierarchies are a traditional framework within organizations. However, the need for distributed leadership of engagement indicates the need to democratize access to engagement architecture for CEPs.

Sometimes, the unit-level architecture can overshadow the consideration of institutional praxis. One CEP said, “I don’t know if there’s a list of strategies within the University of Pittsburgh [or] if there’s a document somewhere or something online that says what the strategies are. I couldn’t name them for you.” The CEPs described instances of visible and accessible infrastructure. However, their responses indicated that the guiding institutional artifacts might be too far removed from practice to be assets to CEPs. The results suggest that uniting the disparate experiences of Pitt staff might require high-level, inclusive strategies for engagement. One CEP said,
I haven’t looked very closely at the Plan for Pitt, so I couldn’t, if someone asked me, explain exactly how my role rolls up into the general strategy of the university. I think that like things like that [plan] would be helpful to understand.

Again, contextual opportunities to use individual and OD methods could be a way to connect CEPs to the engagement architecture.

The CEPs frequently mentioned the ECA as a centralized resource, especially those who partnered closely with the unit or accessed ECA-facilitated opportunities. An engagement office is an asset to CEPs’ practices and understanding of engagement as an institutional priority. Additionally, the study’s findings showed the ECA was a way to counteract some but not all of the confusion and disconnections between CEPs, the field, and Pitt as an organization. Even the CEPs who considered themselves knowledgeable of the fundamentals of community engagement and had received helpful institutional knowledge, high-quality relationships, and clear goals for their roles and responsibilities reported a disconnect from the guiding strategies and desired institutional outcomes for engagement. A lack of vision and aligning direction made the CEPs feel isolated from goals outside their units and closest collaborators. The CEPs described the few professional growth opportunities specific to their priorities as limited but beneficial for building internal community and knowledge. Communicating directly to CEPs about the institutional priorities closest to their contexts of practice could better support architecture that encourages full CEP participation across the institution and on behalf of the institution.
6.1.3 Additional Themes for Future Inquiry

In addition to the primary themes, interrelated themes emerged from the CEP responses. The personal and professional identity and unique positionality of CEPs gave them a grounding purpose and a throughline across roles and functions. The participants used words such as “passion” and “care” to describe their work, identity, and values of engagement. The findings showed the emotional intelligence of those who hold relationships in high regard and seek institutional architecture to bolster those who do not have the benefits of the conditions of practice to cultivate their intrinsic motivators. Also present were the dueling concepts of being positioned to share resources across the institution and external communities while navigating a bureaucracy that produces and indicates a scarcity of resources (again, both internally and externally with systems with an impact on communities).

To that end, and in line with the central theme of polarity, the CEPs in this study wanted Pitt’s leaders to reorient the institution toward more adaptive and community-conversant ways of knowing and prioritizing knowledge. The participants also commended the visible changes in practices and priorities within the institution. The Pitt CEPs understood that each example of successful partnership occurred alongside the reality of both general and specific histories of harm and extraction due to the academy at large and the institution. The CEPs’ restorative orientation and repair prioritization suggest that community assumptions and prior interactions could have valid undertones of cynicism and skepticism.

The theme of collective naming and defining of community engagement reflected an interesting condition of praxis. Multiple responses included an aspect of professional growth that resulted from mentorship, peer learning, and professional development experiences. The experiences provided the shared language and orientation the CEPs needed for the community-
engaged praxis to advance feelings of professional identity and belonging. Due to the open-ended CEP identity and institutional function, CEPs sometimes opted for greater access and engagement through the community of practice and ECA outreach and engagement newsletters. The CEPs had limited opportunities because of the passive management of the group. Therefore, CEPs would benefit from a more active infrastructure for communications and distribution support. Finally, community and stakeholder impact and the application of learning as it related to engagement were themes that emerged throughout the responses. I focused the interviews on such a specific line of inquiry that I may have failed to discover the foundational aspects of being an engagement practitioner outside of the explicit question about the aims of community engagement in higher education.

6.1.4 Artifact Analysis

Four of the 12 artifacts aligned with all aspects of the rubric: the ECA website, the CEC website, the Community Engaged Scholarship Forum website, and the Office of PittServes website. Interestingly, each website appeared on at least one other page. In a cross-reference of both ECA and PittServes (and their associated staff) in the CEP narratives, the ECA was a department associated with words such as leadership, strategy, connection, support, and the Community Engaged Scholarship Forum. Three of the four websites were maintained directly by ECA department professionals as the leaders and central support of the institution’s engagement praxis and public scholarship. The artifact rubric office aligned with the CEPs who cited the office and its leader, Dostilio, as key influences on institutional architecture. The participants also described the Office of PittServes as a direct support for students and a leading collaborator for the CEPs running student-facing programs. Both offices appeared to have emergent and expanding
offerings for their respective constituencies. The Office of PittServes, the ECA, and the Office of the Provost (Office of Government Relations and Advocacy, 2018) were the only units within the artifact review that had co-branded artifacts for the CEP praxis and orientation for shared functions within the institution (University of Pittsburgh Office of Engagement and Community Affairs, 2022).

Across the target artifacts, the institution used comprehensive reports or tactical, activity-oriented highlights for broad audiences as their primary engagement communications strategies. Of notable difference was the availability of comprehensive language for and artifacts on public service and volunteerism. A limiting factor of the materials’ efficacy was the lack of active distribution to target audiences. As shown in Table 3, infrastructure (i.e., strategies, systems, measurement, and rewards) was the most prominent aspect of institutional architecture across the 12 sample artifacts; an interesting result considering the participants’ overall feelings of disconnect from the institutional engagement strategy. As of the submission of this dissertation, the ECA had an 8-year strategic plan and strategic messaging framework for engagement in process or under consideration. A new dean of students at the Division of Student Affairs and a leadership change for the Office of PittServes resulted in a strategic internal inquiry and realignment. Although the participants reported a strong rapport with both offices, the results showed a functional gap within the institutional architecture. The functional gap could require a response codeveloped across the university community to provide direct support for CEP growth, including engagement conditions, engagement design, and architectural abstracts to improve CEP recall of key artifact content.

Chapter 7.0 presents the OD methods and priorities that appear the most relevant to Pitt’s current engagement architecture. The final qualitative analysis of this study entailed exploring the connections and divergences across the data sources and intragroup CEP narratives.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Primary audience</th>
<th>Noted in interview?</th>
<th>Communicate engagement conditions?</th>
<th>Communicate engagement infrastructure?</th>
<th>Communicate engagement design?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan for Pitt</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>Y - awareness</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA website</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>Y – awareness and content</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC website</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>Y – awareness and content</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement and Outreach Map</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>Y – awareness and content</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engaged Scholarship Forum</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>Y – awareness and content</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA – Institutional Master Plan public dashboard</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>Y – awareness</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Provost</td>
<td>Primarily internal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of PittServes</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>Y – awareness and content</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Government Relations and Advocacy*</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Diversity&amp; Development</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalizing the Pitt Experience</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Computing and Information</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external</td>
<td>Y – awareness and content</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>8/12</td>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>8/12</td>
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</table>
Figure 4 Architectural Insights

Figure 4 presents architectural insights from survey responses, semistructured interviews, and artifact analysis. These insights link to organizational capacity for change, specifically the type of change that can be iterative and ongoing in alignment with dialogic praxis.
7.0 Implications and Recommendations

This inquiry spanned a three-year time period that was marked by significant shifts in praxis and priorities for both CEPs and myself as a researcher. The COVID-19 pandemic limited my ability to use in-person group components initially scoped as part of a larger qualitative base of data. For the latter part of my inquiry, remote and hybrid work fatigueplayed a role in my ability to convene focus groups and deploy additional surveys that could supplement semistructured interviews. Target group responses dropped from 73 responses down to nine between year one and year three surveys. The loss of informal socialization across CEPs also limited newer staff roles from being able to access key architectural supports in the same way that staff that joined before March of 2020 did. Institutional change also was baked into the heart of this inquiry as architecture needed to accommodate all the types of change necessary as the world shifted towards new norms. The university experienced early retirements, a shift to an updated strategic plan, CEPs transitioning into new and different roles, hybrid work and engagement environments where there weren’t previously, and the creation of ECA as a standalone lead of the engagement function all informed the narratives cultivated as well as opportunities for future inquiry.

An inherent and obvious dual strength and limitation in this inquiry is that each participating CEP had several interactions with me in my professional ECA capacity. Support for the CEP community is an integral part of my scholarly-practitioner priorities, both formally and informally. My professional practice engages broad groups of internal colleagues and allies to create areas of shared understanding which might eventually lead to shared priorities and programming. My scholarly methods included attempts to include a broad set of practitioners. I invited CEPs with whom I did not have direct professional relationships for the semistructured
interviews. However, they did not respond to two invitations over 2 weeks. I believe that experience contributed to the focus on relationships expressed in the CEP responses and reaffirmed my professional goal to foster an accessible and visibly engaged campus with an active learning orientation. An engaged Pitt campus requires adaptive change and growth to address the constructs and themes shared by the CEPs as key to their knowledge and beliefs, efficacy, and connectedness.

The following recommendations are a springboard for additional explorations of OD principles useful for advancing and institutionalizing engagement. My goal was to contribute to the literature showing CEPs as critical to the institution’s unique epistemologies and summative practices. Assessing or evaluating the current praxis at Pitt with the OD orientation is a novel topic for the higher education community engagement literature. The sources I used in my study and literature review indicated the need to support the engagement function through content and competencies. Core structure and connections across indicators grounded in the language and orientation of dialogic OD is a closer cultural and contextual fit than more traditional academic change management models and, I believe, a more appropriate fit for CEPs.

The data collected from the surveys, semistructured interviews, and artifact analysis showed that the institutional architecture at Pitt should be an ongoing change process. The ongoing change process could support CEPs’ relationships and values, advance CEPs’ ability to work through intergroup conflicts in priorities and approaches, and develop guiding goals and strategies for individual units and institutional aspirations. Visible investments in engagement design and an organizational climate and culture should be the drivers of those changes. The CEP interviews indicate that high-regard frameworks focused on CEPs’ ongoing investment to create and cultivate partnerships could be a way to connect CEPs to institutional strategies.
Learning and development formats tailored to an institutional culture focused on peer-to-peer experiences could facilitate generative architecture. The 2019 survey showed that the CEPs at Pitt had a strong interest in people, teams, and the ability to build expertise connected to intrinsic motivators. Care, supportive interlinkages, and CEP stewardship of institutional resources are important anchors that relieve transactional pressures and norms within the academy. CEPs’ ability to locate and access internal architecture, initiate high-quality relationships, and participate in opportunities to learn and collaborate is key to increasing the institutional capacity for engagement. I found it reaffirming that Pitt’s CEPs valued multimedia and online resources, which I also used to onboard myself to the national field and become familiar with the language of HEI civic and community engagement.
Despite mapping Pitt’s current architecture to provide insights, my intent was not to set diagnosis or prescriptive ways the university’s members should engage in change. Figure 5 shows the organizational dynamics within the boundaries of a change schema with flexible application and iteration. The purpose of this foundational inquiry was to invite CEPs into an institutional space for consideration through future tests of change embedded in improvement science. Dialogic OD provides a set of organizational assumptions and methods helpful in influencing the mindsets rather than the behaviors within the system. Bushe and Marshak (2009) asserted, “Dialogic OD doesn’t seek to change behavior directly, as Diagnostic OD does. Instead, Dialogic OD focuses on
changing the frameworks that guide what people think and say” (p. 355). Shifting from focusing on activities or outputs to approaches and interlinkages could enable the university’s leaders to capture and respond to the praxis of CEPs. Cooperation and contention appear to be critical aspects of the meaning-making priorities of engagement professionals.

As part of my professional role, I will look to reinforce and reorient my own practice to better acclimate CEPs to Pitt’s institutional architecture for engagement through greater access to one another as well as leadership and guiding strategies. I will also seek to grow CEP critical consideration across infrastructure, design, and conditions to encourage innovation and design thinking. Specifically, I will look to orient our ECOP group to center intentional, participatory group inquiry as a model to engage practitioners in co-leading their own development. This, I believe, will reinforce the infrastructure of engagement and better position learning artifacts as a guide to access key resources. Next, I believe that our data and assessment practice as an institution can shift to away from diagnostic measures of performance and success for engagement. Mindsets and orientations continue to be key drivers of both CEP narratives and link to the field through indirect research; growing attention and understanding of those key factors could lead to future innovation for institutional praxis and the conditions of engagement for CEPs and partner organizations. Finally, this inquiry underscores that distributed leadership models have the potential of high success due to the unique nature of an emergent and ever-changing engagement landscape. Visible leaders and facilitators of strategy and professional growth are critical, but they must be paired with adept CEPs that are confident in their knowledge and beliefs, efficacy, and connectedness for the institutionalization of engagement to advance to a generative space.

There is broad application to this research. Institutional praxis is not a static concept; instead, it is a set of realities and interactions that presents differently across individuals and teams.
With a focus on the emergent, subjective nature of change, dialogic OD is the highly relational implementation of processes to incorporate the social constructs at the institution (Bushe & Marshak, 2009). OD was the approach used in this study to explore Pitt’s capacity to support meaningful discourse through CEP narratives and the artifacts visible to them. A focus on generativity or the interrogation and active cultivation of the CEP voice could lead to an institutional standard for full participation of assets rather than problem-solving. That standard, to me, would be a transformational opportunity to institutionalize engagement and prioritize what I call indigenous epistemologies within the field. CEPs have foundational orientations and assumptions useful for elevating community-informed and maintained wisdom, and the institution’s members have an opportunity to do likewise. This study could be a critical precursor for tests of change and generativity within the institution and a springboard for highlighting CEP narratives as central to assessing Pitt’s engagement praxis. Other institutions and administrators could consider the organizational capacity model that I present in this study as a starting point for reconsidering their pathway to the institutionalization of community engagement as well as their organization’s use of staff narratives in determining where architectural investments could be made.
Appendix A 2019 Survey Analysis

Methods

Questionnaire methods
• Data Collected via Qualtrics
• Identifying information + 6 questions
• Data analyzed in Qualtrics (quant & text analysis)

Interview methods
• Data Collected via Zoom using semi-structured interview guide
• 8 questions
• Data to be analyzed using content analysis
Participants

Questionnaire Participants
Sample size (n = 73)
Community Engaged Professionals at the University of Pittsburgh that self-selected into the Engagement Community of Practice (ECOP), which was promoted via email, Provost website, and CGR website.

Interview Participants
Sample size (n = 2)
Community Engaged Professionals that I have a direct professional relationship with.
Q - How does the facilitation of community engagement look in your unit

- I am the only one who facilitates CE
- I have staff colleagues who facilitate CE
- I have staff and faculty colleagues who facilitate CE
Q - How does the facilitation of community engagement look in your unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am the only one that facilitates CE</td>
<td>16.98%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I have staff colleagues that facilitate CE</td>
<td>37.74%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I have staff and faculty colleagues that facilitate CE</td>
<td>45.28%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q - How does the facilitation of community engagement look in your unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How does the facilitation of community engagement look in your unit</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q - From where do you get your professional development in community engagement?
Q - From where do you get your professional development in community engagement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Community Engagement Conferences</td>
<td>11.60%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Academic Journals</td>
<td>13.81%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>27.07%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Media: webinars, online videos, podcasts...</td>
<td>14.92%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Online resources published by CE related organizations</td>
<td>13.26%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.29%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>11.05%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q - Please describe the other ways you get your professional development (Other)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please describe the other ways you get your professional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimentation and public speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in community organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health practice and praxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not specify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q - Do you have community engagement mentors?

- Yes: 43.40%
- No: 56.60%
Q. Please describe how you facilitate your department/unit's engagement in the community.
Q. Please describe how you facilitate your department/unit's engagement in the community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>People Attributes</td>
<td>28.71%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Service Provision</td>
<td>26.73%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>16.83%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Deliverables &amp; Products</td>
<td>12.87%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Industry Expertise</td>
<td>11.88%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Partnering</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q - What are you hoping to gain from participating in the Community of Practice (CoP)?
Q - What are you hoping to gain from participating in the Community of Practice (CoP)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Performance &amp; Development</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Execution</td>
<td>17.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Human Related Feedback</td>
<td>17.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>People and Teams</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Diversity, Inclusion, &amp; Fairness</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pay &amp; Benefits</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Lessons Learned

- People, Performance/Implementation, Learning & Development, Access to Feedback, and Access to collaborative opportunities are important to CEP's at the University of Pittsburgh.
- Most CEPs work with/on teams and turn to peers to learn and advance practice.
- Only one CEP explicitly cited the institution as a capacity-building resource, but many cite that their practice is informed by institutional expectations and offerings.
- This data highlights for me that the problem I have identified, is indeed, a problem that exists and worthy of tackling.
Appendix B Semistructured Interview Protocol, Questionnaire Protocol

Interview Script

Thank you for taking time out of your day for me. I am speaking with you as a student interested in the experiences of the people who facilitate community engagement for Pitt in some way as a part of their professional role. Specifically, I would like to learn more about the things you do that contribute to your practice, professional growth, and sense of community.

The interview will last less than 1 hour, and I will take notes and record audio with your permission. I will use this information for the research necessary for my dissertation in practice.

All responses will remain confidential, and the final dissertation will not include identifying statements.

1. Do you identify as a community engagement professional? Why or why not?

   Yes, because I seek to develop reciprocal relationships through my role at the university.

   a. What is your understanding of the aims of community engagement in higher education?
For the most part, education systems are large and have a large impact on the neighborhood they’re in. They have an impact on the members [who] live and work there. If they aren’t considering the people [who] live there, they are doing a disservice to the community.

2. Every organization has a unique set of routines, assumptions, and priorities. Please share your understanding of the specific climate, culture, and behaviors related to outreach and engagement at the University of Pittsburgh.

   a. How do the conditions of practice you shared with me impact your role?
   b. What aspects of the conditions of practice would contribute to your understanding of your identity as a community engagement professional or your role and responsibilities at Pitt?
   c. What would you say Pitt has the most pride in as it relates to institutional community engagement conditions (outcomes and outputs)?

3. What is your understanding of the ecosystem of community-engaged roles at the University of Pittsburgh?
   a. What roles, accountabilities, and interlinkages are the most important to Pitt?
   b. What roles, accountabilities, and interlinkages are the most important to your role and responsibilities?

4. What institutional support for community engagement does the University of Pittsburgh provide?
   a. Are there strategies for community engagement practice?
   b. Are there tangible tools, measurements, or goals that you use in your role to guide your practice?
   c. Is there a shared infrastructure that you would find helpful in your role?

5. What results of engagement do you consider important to the University of Pittsburgh?
   a. Where do you find them, and how are they communicated?
   b. Do those results align with the goals of your role?
   c. Are there any outputs or outcomes you consider overrepresented or underappreciated?

6. What activities or opportunities have made you feel like the leaders of the University of Pittsburgh have invested in your professional identity and growth?
a. What experiences have you had that were offered or facilitated by someone other than Pitt that contributed to your professional identity and growth?
b. What, specifically, about those experiences did you find helpful?

7. Would you like to add anything else?

I will analyze your information and add it to what I learn from others over the course of my studies and dissertation writing. I am happy to share more about my dissertation in practice, my problem of practice, and my research outcomes at your convenience.

Thank you so much for your time.
Appendix C Institutional Review Board Exemption Determination

**EXEMPT DETERMINATION**

<table>
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<th>April 1, 2022</th>
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<tr>
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<td>STUDY22020203</td>
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<tr>
<td>PI:</td>
<td>Jamilah Ducar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>USING ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT TO ADVANCE A GENERATIVE INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS</td>
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<td>Funding:</td>
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The Institutional Review Board reviewed and determined the above referenced study meets the regulatory requirements for exempt research under 45 CFR 46.104.

**Determination Documentation**

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<td>(2)(ii) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation (low risk)</td>
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| Approved Documents: | • Ducar Questionnaire Protocol.docx, Category: Waiver Script;  
                      • Ducar Questionnaire Protocol.docx, Category: Data Collection;  
                      • Ducar Exemption Form, Category: IRB Protocol;  
                      • Informational Script - Ducar_Version_0.01.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials;  
                      • IRB recruitment template.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials; |

If you have any questions, please contact the University of Pittsburgh IRB Coordinator, [Amy Fuhrman](mailto:amy.fuhrman@pitt.edu).

*Please take a moment to complete our [Satisfaction Survey](https://example.com/satisfaction_survey) as we appreciate your feedback.*
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