Forum / Tribune

Reconceptualizing University Extension and Public Service

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Abstract

The full development and potential contribution of university extension is limited by confusion about its basic nature and misunderstanding about its relationship to other concepts such as public service and outreach. This article addresses the evolution, role, and basic characteristics of university extension, as well as various sources of uncertainty and confusion about it and the importance of achieving greater common understanding about its function. A framework and definition are provided for developing a shared perspective on the concept of university extension in the context of scholarship and public service.

Résumé

Le développement complet et la contribution potentielle du service universitaire de formation permanente sont limités par la confusion sur sa nature fondamentale et par sa relation malcomprise aux autres conceptes telles que la fonction publique et les activités de diffusion externe. Cet article adresse l'évolution, le rôle et les caractéristiques fondamentales du service universitaire de formation permanente, ainsi que ses diverses sources d'incertitude et de confusion et l'importance d'accomplir une plus grande compréhension commune par rapport à sa fonction. Un schéma et une définition sont fournis pour développer une perspective partagée sur le concepte du service

universitaire en formation
permanente dans le contexte de
l'érudition et de la fonction
publique.

INTRODUCTION

University extension began at Oxford and Cambridge in England in the
mid-1800s. Ever since then, it has been concerned generally with the
provision of learning opportunities to people who were unable, or
unwilling, to attend and participate in the regular programs of universities
(Portman, 1978, pp. 48–51; Shannon & Schoenfeld, 1965, p. 9; Van Hise,
1990, pp. 20–35). In that sense, university extension has always been about
deliberate efforts to extend learning opportunities beyond the full-time, on-
campus students of the universities to people in the larger community.

   As the concept and practice of extension spread to other universities
throughout Europe and North America, the specific form and purpose of
the function changed and, in many ways, evolved markedly over the years.
This evolution occurred largely in response to the differing and changing
social, economic, and political conditions in which universities operated,
the varying visions of university leadership in response to those conditions,
and the emerging educational, communication, and information
technologies.

   The overriding purposes and themes of extension programs in North
America and particularly in Canada have evolved. They now range from
dissemination of technological change in agriculture, to emphasis on a more
liberal education for the improvement of the quality of life and the
upgrading of individual capacity to share democratic responsibility, to
developing and refurbishing technical/professional and vocational skills, to
focusing on specific themes such as community development and citizen
participation, women's liberation, and cultural and recreative endeavours.
As testimony to the growing importance of extension education, there has
been spectacular growth in the number and variety of public and private
organizations operating in this field. During the past decade, there has also
been what may be only the beginning of very dramatic, if not
transformational, changes in the way education will be provided and

learning enhanced through the innovative use of new information and communication technologies. Nonetheless, there is a serious risk that the real potential for university extension to serve individuals and communities will be limited through a serious undervaluing by university faculty and administrators of the extension function.

Basic Dimensions of University Extension

University extension is primarily community focused and client or learner oriented. Accordingly, it has developed dedicated systems, facilities, and expertise to effectively connect university knowledge resources with problems and opportunities confronting the external community. This is done through the provision of programs, products, and services that are distinctive in terms of one or more of the following dimensions.

1. **Audience** (Who): the breadth of access to knowledge resources, and participation in lifelong learning opportunities has been extended to persons, organizations, and communities otherwise unable to take advantage of such resources because their special needs and circumstances make participation in existing programs and services ineffective, inefficient, difficult, or impossible.

2. **Purposes** (Why): the knowledge development process—from creation and integration to dissemination and practical application—has been extended to a broad range of personal, professional, and social issues, problems, and concerns in the community at large, such as in personal, community, organizational, economic, social, and cultural development and technology transfer.

3. **Content** (What): curricula of integrated, multidisciplinary, research-based knowledge that incorporates different perspectives—often cutting across many established academic disciplines, departments, and prescribed programs of professional study—has been extended to areas such as environmental studies, government studies, health and wellness promotion, industrial technology management, and women's studies.

4. **Times** (When): the provision of access to knowledge resources has been extended beyond traditional or conventional times—such as scheduling learning activities during late afternoon and evening, spring (intersession) and summer sessions, weekdays and

weekends, day long and week long, or at any time, as in self-paced, independent/home study.

5. **Places** (Where): the provision of access to knowledge resources has been extended beyond the traditional or conventional campus to where people live and work—such as off-campus throughout the province and the world—using existing and specially designed public and private facilities (workplaces/worksites, residences/homes, community centres, shopping centres, educational institutions, and transportation facilities and equipment).

6. **Educational technology** (How): the innovative application of education technology has been extended by methods, techniques, and instructional design systems, including face-to-face and distance delivery methods, demonstrations, learning contracts, mentorships, work study, cooperative learning, and self-directed learning, which provide for collaborative, distributed, and individualized learning, and increased depth of learning (integration, evaluation, and application vs. memorization and recall).

7. **Communication and information technology** (How): the innovative application and integration of communication and information technology for enhanced instruction and learning has been extended by devices such as print media and electronic media (telephones/Internet, cellular technology, radio, high-definition television, microwave, satellite, cable, fibre optics transmission, instantaneous data exchange, video and audio tapes, CD-ROM, computers).

8. **Policies and procedures** (How): the creative application of academic and administrative policies and procedures that recognize the special circumstances of mature students, as well as those of client organizations and communities, and that encourage the integration of research with application and education with lifelong learning, and both of these with broader social and economic policies has been extended by policies and procedures related to admissions, residency, and cooperative arrangements with other public, private, and voluntary agencies, articulation of credit transfer between and among programs, credit by prior–learning assessment, contract research, and technology transfer arrangements.

Extension programs often introduce innovative practices that become adopted and integrated more widely within the university. For example, continuing education, once almost totally confined to the realm of extension departments, is increasingly being integrated into the regular programs of many other faculties and departments. Similarly, flexible admission and residency policies pioneered by extension programs are becoming more widely adopted by other units within many universities. The inspiration for such changes derives from the focus that university extension units bring to bear on the external community.

IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

The justification for, and importance of, the extension function derives from the belief that the ultimate purpose of the public university is to be of service to its larger community or society at large (Van Hise, 1990, pp. 20–35). Service in this sense is not viewed as a function (as with teaching and research), but as a goal or purpose that animates and guides the basic work of a university. It reflects the desire directly "to serve the social order which needs and nourishes the public university" (Mawby, 1990, p. 206). Or, as stated by Musa (1994), "Extension education is an imperative . . . [and] is central to any university which is not to divorce itself from the fabric of the society in which it is based" (p. 177).

This mission of public service was demonstrated most notably with the creation of the Land-Grant Colleges in the United States. In the words of the Morrill Act of 1862, such institutions were established "to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes" with an initial emphasis on agriculture and the mechanical arts. The Hatch Act of 1887 established the agricultural experimental stations in connection with the Land-Grant Colleges. Then, in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act provided a permanent appropriation of funds for the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service to disseminate the results of research, using the Land-Grant Colleges as the administrative base for formally involving the federal, state, and local governments (Rohfeld, 1990, pp. 12–19).

This belief in the public service mission is also reflected, for example, in the Universities Act of the Province of Alberta, which states that:

> It is a duty and function of each university to contribute to the educational and cultural advancement of the people of Alberta at large and a board may establish and provide programs, services and facilities to carry out those purposes, and co-operate with any other

institution, body or person for the establishment and provision of those programs, services and facilities, in any manner the board considers proper. (Alberta Universities Act, 1990 § 17.2)

At an institutional level, service to the public is captured in university mission statements. The mission statement of the University of Alberta (1993) declares its intention "to serve our community by the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and the discovery of knowledge through research" (p.2). Similarly, the mission statement of the University of Saskatchewan asserts that it "belongs to the people of Saskatchewan [and is] dedicated to the service of the people of Saskatchewan and Canada." [1]

Universities serve the public through the pursuit of scholarship, which traditionally means the basic functions of research and teaching. Many, if not most, universities also refer to "service" as a third basic function, and, extension is often categorized with this function. Service, however, is usually not given the same priority as the other functions; consequently, in operational terms of allocation of resources and making judgements about professional performance, service and extension seldom receive much consideration. According to Boyer (1990):

Basic research has come to be viewed as the first and most essential form of scholarly activity, with other functions flowing from it. Scholars are academics who conduct research, publish, and then perhaps convey their knowledge to students or apply what they have learned. (p. 15)

If extension is so important—to communities, to fulfilling the public service mandate of universities, and to enhancing the well-being of universities—why is it not valued more within universities? The thesis of this article is that extension is sometimes undervalued within universities, in part, because its nature is not understood as a basic function and seldom defined in terms of the primary scholarly functions of research and teaching. Moreover, this situation is both reflected in, and aggravated by, ambiguities, conflicts, and confusion regarding the meaning of the many different concepts and terms associated with the function.

AMBIGUITIES, CONFLICTS, AND CONFUSION IN TERMS

Because those served by extension programs have primarily been people in the larger, off-campus community, university extension is often associated with other related concepts and terms such as "public service,"

"community service," "outreach," "continuing education," "continuing studies," "technology transfer," "extra mural studies," and even "public relations." Extension and more recently continuing education have been the more generally used terms, as indicated, for example, in the names of many university administrative/academic units responsible for the function and in the names of the associated major national academic/professional associations in the United States and Canada. Despite this, individual universities have come to formally, and informally, use a wide variety of such terms to refer to the extension function.

Confusion regarding the meaning of university extension and public service is apparent in how they are used and understood, and in the assumptions behind these terms. Agreeing upon what constitutes an underlying philosophy of extension is at least as important as arriving at a common understanding of the term itself (Fairbairn, 1990).

In addition, each term has a number of inconsistently defined and used synonyms. For example, extension is often used interchangeably with outreach or with adult (and/or) continuing education. Similarly, public service, community service, and civic service are often treated as synonyms.

Moreover, there is some debate about whether extension and public service are discrete concepts (presumably with some degree of overlap), or whether one concept incorporates the other (and as to which one incorporates the other). For example, Downey (1988) clearly perceived public service to be a component of the larger concept of extension. He proposed that extension

> . . . includes everything my institution does to facilitate access by people other than its full-time students to our courses, our research, and our various facilities. It also includes everything we do to make our knowledge and services relevant to those clients' needs and interests. (p. 20)

By contrast, Campbell (1977) stated that university extension is ". . . an ingredient in university public service" (p. 41). Not surprisingly, the lack of consensus concerning how the concepts of extension and public service relate to each other is associated with a basic confusion regarding the meaning of each.

Fairbairn (1990) noted that extension is not an easy concept to define. He described efforts made in 1985 at the University of Saskatchewan to assemble a summary of extension and public service activities undertaken by individual colleges (faculties). He observed that there was a wide variety

in the types of activities reported and that the College of Arts and Science ". . . had immense difficulty determining what extension activities were . . . conducted by its faculty" (p. 7). In addition, he noted that none of the colleges made any reference to the off-campus teaching of credit courses in the set of extension activities they identified. He argued that the terms "extension" or "adult education" should be distinguished from the terms "public service" and "community relations" since the former are part of the essential educational mission of the institution, whereas the latter describe non-educational functions (pp. 1–2). Fairbairn suggested that the term "public service" be used in relation to non-educational activities such as serving on boards and committees of charitable organizations. Others argue that public service must be restricted to activities dependent upon one's academic expertise (Boyer, 1990; Lynton & Elman, 1987; McCall, 1996; Schomberg & Farmer, 1994).

The concept of public service or, more generally, of service is widely misunderstood. Apps (1988) noted that:

> Much misunderstanding exists because of the ambiguous nature of public service. . . . The prevailing view of public service at many institutions is that of faculty members giving an occasional speech at a Kiwanis Club meeting or serving on the local public library board. (p. 156)

Boyer (1990) reported that:

> Colleges and universities have recently rejected service as serious scholarship, partly because its meaning is so vague and often disconnected from serious intellectual work. As used today, service in the academy covers an almost endless number of campus activities. . . . It is not unusual for almost any worthy project to be dumped into the amorphous category called 'service'. (p. 22)

A recent report by DesRosiers and Associates (1997, p. 20) described the community service function of universities as including the following activities: contract research; consultation to the private and public sectors (both remunerated and non-remunerated); services to one's own discipline, including contributions to professional associations; committees of research granting councils; and external review committees.

By contrast, Fear & Sandmann (1995, p. 115) reported that a committee at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University described four types of service:

1. "public service," which is the practical application of knowledge accumulated through scholarly activity;

2. "university service," which consists of activities other than teaching and research that contribute to the growth and development of the university as an entity;

3. "professional service," which involves contributions made toward the advancement of scholarly and professional organizations; and

4. "community service," which consists of civic and other contributions to society made by those associated with the university but not as part of their job or course-related responsibilities.

In the first report, community service includes a set of activities directly related to an individual's area of academic expertise; in contract, the second report uses the same term to describe activities unrelated to such expertise.

One reason for such a multiplicity of terms is the widely differing particular experiences with extension, well-entrenched regional traditions, wide-ranging views about the roles of extension, and the basic professional educational backgrounds of the people involved (Baker, 1987, p. 2). Another contributing factor is that university extension, as a field of study and practice, has not progressed very far in developing and promoting a common vocabulary for itself, particularly within the limited amount of research conducted in the field.

This diversity in the use of terms also reflects the fact that historically in university extension, practitioners have typically entered the field with advanced education and training (and usually considerable related experience) in a specific field such as agriculture, business, engineering, fine arts, languages, or nursing, but without any formal study in fields directly related to adult, continuing, or extension education (Bains, 1985; Bruce, Maxwell & Galvin, 1986; English, 1992; Percival, 1993). Consequently, they have developed much of their understanding of the field quite informally, and usually within the context of specific institutions, and even within specific programs of practice.

NEED FOR A COMMON UNDERSTANDING

Not surprisingly, the university extension function is represented by many different, but interrelated, concepts and terms, which, as many have noted,

do not enjoy singular and widely shared definitions (e.g., Apps, 1988; Boyer, 1990; Fairbairn, 1990; Fear & Sandmann, 1995; Hayden, 1983; Lynton & Elman, 1987; McCall, 1996; Schomberg & Farmer, 1994). This, in turn, contributes to the considerable, and long-standing, confusion in the field. Hayden (1983) noted that Walter Murray, the first president of the University of Saskatchewan, saw extension as being important both as a service to the state and as publicity for the University (p. 68).

This confusion is not inconsequential. Fairbairn (1990) observed that confusion regarding the meaning of extension, public service, and public relations, has " . . . de-legitimized extension within the university, weakened it in terms of the resources and attention it receives, and contributed to the institution as a whole forgetting some of the educational obligations it has to society" (p. 2). For example, while some universities (and colleges or faculties within some institutions) maintain separate categories for extension and public service activities, others have combined the categories for purposes of tenure and promotion considerations. Still others appear to make no explicit provision for reporting and rewarding extension and/or public service activities.

Commenting on the many definitions and interpretations of extension-related terms, Baker (1987) noted that:

> The significance of these differences is not so much in the wording of each definition as in the underlying assumptions that influence extension organizational behavior and that these conceptual differences can get in the way of optimizing the effectiveness of extension. They tend to hinder such important functions as intra- and inter-organizational communication and linkages, national and inter-provincial policy formation. (p. 2)

Perhaps the most significant consequence of this confusion is the limiting of the emerging role of extension within the modern university. Universities are facing major challenges as they enter the new millennium, including:

1. maintaining or improving excellence of academic programs—teaching and research;

2. increasing access to academic programs—learning opportunities;

3. dealing with financial restraint and increasing emphasis on cost recovery;

4. maintaining autonomy and shared governance;

5. responding to changing societal needs and expectations for educational institutions; and

6. increasing public demand for accountability—for effectiveness and efficiency.

As a consequence of these and other forces, at least one authority, President-Emeritus Steven Muller (1990) of Johns Hopkins University, predicted that:

> There are four major areas in which the colleges and universities of the very near future are going to be radically different from where we still are and where we have been in the last 20 or 25 years: we are going to serve a substantially altered clientele; we are going to deliver our services in new ways; the content of our service is going to be different; and the style in which we operate is going to change. (p. 207)

Within this context, university extension may move from the margin towards the centre of the university—as a broker between university disciplines and community needs, even "becoming a kind of guiding mechanism—a rudder—to the parent institutions" (Miller, 1990, p. 220).

Some signs of this shift are appearing at some universities as new campus-wide responsibilities and initiatives are incorporated with the extension function, for example, responsibility for the integration of new communication and information technologies to enhance the quality and access to learning. However, realizing the full potential of the extension function will require a clearer and more widely shared common understanding of the fundamental meaning of the concept and term "extension" and its relationship with other functions of the university, particularly the highly valued scholarly functions of teaching and research.

COMMUNITY VS. INSTITUTIONAL ORIENTATION

The source or catalyst for an extension or public service activity may arise from within or without the university. As Hein (1993) noted, one can start by examining the resources (existing programs, courses, facilities, etc.) of the institution and look for external opportunities to which these resources can be applied, or one can look to the external community to determine what needs exist to which the university can usefully respond. An example of an institutionally oriented initiative is providing and promoting access to the university's swimming pool to the general public. An example of a

community oriented initiative is the design, production, promotion, and delivery of a leadership development program in response to a request from representatives of rural communities.

These two approaches reflect fundamentally different institutional philosophies and generate very different institutional responses. Although public service might be associated with either approach, some argue that extension is inextricably linked with responses to externally defined needs (e.g., Boone, 1989; Musa, 1994). In our view, this is the central mission of university extension units. They establish and maintain effective linkages with the various communities (e.g., geographic, professional, cultural) serviced by their host institution; they assist these communities in identifying and defining their needs (opportunities and/or problems) to which the university can usefully respond, and they design, produce, promote, and provide educational programs that address the problems or needs.

This two-way communication-loop that is characteristic of the relationship between university extension and the community was noted by Musa (1994) when he emphasized that extension specialists

> ". . . convey information, ideas, knowledge and skills to a captive target audience, but they also feed the people's viewpoints back to the designing agency, research station and policy makers. . . . To be effective . . . an extension department has to possess a societal "feeler," and have the expertise to diagnose the emergent needs, demands, aspirations and expectations of people living in complex communities. (pp. 177–178)

University extension units are expected to be especially responsive to the collective needs of the community and the organizations within it, as well as to the needs of individual adult and part-time learners. Hentschel (1991) stated that:

> Nowhere are the traditional administrative structures more detrimental than in the kinds of programs and services offered to adult learners. . . . The expertise and sensitivity of the continuing education school to its clientele's lifestyles and psychological profiles lead to the development of more appropriate ways to accommodate these learners in the academy. (p. 162)

Although all units of the university have the capacity to respond to well-defined requests for extension services, university extension units are especially equipped—in terms of mandate, expertise, facilities—to assist

communities and individual learners to define their needs and develop educational responses appropriate to those needs.

DIFFERENT PURPOSES AND GOALS

Nonetheless, some debate over the central purpose of university extension exists. Cruikshank (1994) argued that:

> Today, that adult education field is divided into two groups: those who see adult education as a vehicle for social change and those who see it as a business in which education, designed for individuals, is bought and sold in the marketplace. While there are small "pockets" of individuals who are engaged in social change-oriented work, for the most part, the entrepreneurial approach has become the dominant one within Canadian university extension practice. . . . This approach to education also tends to permeate universities as a whole. (p. 36)

Continuing budgetary pressures have forced university extension units to direct more of their attention and resources to activities with the greatest potential for revenue generation. Inevitably, this has reduced the attention they pay to serving individuals, organizations, and communities with modest resources. This can threaten the ability of extension units to fulfill their service mandate.

It is also important to recognize that community service is only one of several, often competing, goals or guiding principles of a university. Other goals may include the desire to maintain the tradition of the university as an institution, to foster the development of the disciplines as bodies of knowledge, to attract outstanding faculty and students, and to serve the specific students enrolled both on and off campus. All are evident in a university's structure and are powerfully felt in its operation. Constant tension exists among these goals, since each, if carried to its extreme, contradicts or denies the others (Mawby, 1990, pp. 204–207). Consequently, any important goal, including the extension of quality and access to learning opportunities, must be formally incorporated within the university structure and have its own advocates or champions.

VALUING EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Extension and public service have, in fact, less to do with how we define the terms than with how we measure and value the activities. To illustrate,

when faculty report their teaching and research activities, they tend to do so in units of significance. For example, one reports teaching a three- or six-credit-unit course but is unlikely to report a single guest lecture in a colleague's course. Similarly, one reports manuscripts published and research grants received, but rarely that of assistance provided to a colleague by reading a draft manuscript for publication or unsuccessful research grant applications. In short, the activities reported in these categories tend to represent significant efforts and accomplishments.

By contrast, when faculty report their extension and public service activities, the responses frequently include relatively minor, and apparently unrelated, efforts such as a speech to a service club or a radio interview (see, for example, Fairbairn, 1990, pp. 6–7). In addition to the bewildering heterogeneity of such activities, their relatively modest time commitment can result in an unflattering comparison with the activities reported under the categories of teaching and research. This can have the unfortunate, and generally unintended, effect of making the categories of extension and public service appear less meaningful.

A number of authors have observed that the extension and public service activities undertaken by university faculty tend to receive less institutional recognition and reward than research and teaching activities (Hentschel, 1991; Lynton & Elman, 1987; Williams & Eiserman, 1997). As Fairbairn (1990) noted, individuals and organizations outside the university are generally far more appreciative of the university's extension and public service activities than those within it. Warner, Christenson, Dillman, and Salant (1996) reported the results of a survey of public opinion on the relative level of support for university extension. Respondents were invited to indicate how they would allocate $100 of tax money among the functions of teaching, research, and extension. On average, these respondents would allocate $45 to on-campus teaching, $30 to extension, and $25 to research. The University of Saskatchewan standards document for promotion and tenure[2] defines performance standards in the following categories:

1. teaching ability and performance

2. research, scholarly and artistic work

3. practice of professional skills

4. contributions to administrative responsibilities of the department, college, or University

5. contributions to the extension responsibilities of the department, college, or University

6. public service and contributions to academic and professional bodies.

The standards document describes the extension category as:

> . . . service provided to the community outside the University. It includes such tasks as conducting non-degree courses, workshops and conferences; writing information pamphlets; presenting material on radio and television; developing instructional modules; initiating experimental extension projects; providing advice and information on request to individuals, groups and communities; giving talks or lectures to lay or professional audiences; and generally providing liaison between the University and the community-at-large. (p. 13)

The standards document describes the public service category as activities involving the ". . . application of the expertise or ability associated with a professional position in the candidate's department or non-departmentalized college" (p. 14).

The categories considered for promotion and tenure are mutually exclusive. Accordingly, since extension and teaching are separate categories, recognition for teaching distance education degree-credit courses becomes part of the teaching category rather than the extension category. Since teaching is normally restricted to the instruction of degree-credit courses, the teaching of on-campus courses that are part of certificate programs becomes part of the extension category rather than the teaching category. Moreover, practice of professional skills is separated from public service, but public service is defined in these standards as the application of one's scholarly or professional expertise. Further, in those instances where faculty utilize their professional skills in service to the community outside the University, these activities relate to any one of three categories—practice of professional skills, extension, or public service—but must be assigned to only one.

As Fairbairn (1990) noted, it is likely that the confusion surrounding the concepts of "extension" and "public service" has contributed to a lowered value within the academic community. If we cannot define the concepts, we must not understand them; if we do not understand them, we are not likely to award them high value.

Table 1
Academic Functions Contrasted by Internal vs. External Orientations

	Teaching	Research	Service*
Internal Orientation	Undergraduate and graduate courses offered on-campus during the regular academic session	Research undertaken for publication and intended for audience of academic peers	Academic administration and collegial service on university committees **(University service)**
External Orientation	Certificate, undergraduate, and graduate courses offered at off-campus sites and those offered by distance education Non-credit courses and workshops (including continuing professional education and personal development) **(Extension teaching)**	Program evaluation** Applied research** Consulting** Contract research** **(Extension research**)**	**(Service to academic and professional bodies)** Practice of academic or professional skills in service of individuals, organizations, and communities outside the physical boundaries of the university campus **(Extension service)** **or** **(Public service)****

* One type of service does not appear in this typology as it is not an academic function, community service (also known as civic service) consists of contributions to society that are not related to the academic or professional expertise of faculty members.

** Activities such as consulting are considered to be public service activities only where they are undertaken for little or no remuneration or, at least, where remuneration is not the primary purpose.

From an Outreach Perspective

In their effort to define these concepts, Fear and Sandmann (1995, p. 118), who use outreach as a synonym for extension identified six categories of service: outreach; inreach; university service; service to the profession or discipline; community (or civic) service; and consulting.

They proposed that not all forms of outreach are service and that not all forms of service are outreach. They also define university outreach as:

> a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions. (p. 113)

A frequently expressed typology of the activities of university faculty are the dimensions of teaching, research, and service (e.g., Boyer, 1996; Fear & Sandmann, 1995; McCall, 1996; Spanier, 1997; Votruba, 1996). Table 1 employs this typology to contrast each of these dimensions by internal vs. external orientations. The internal orientation focuses upon the traditional disciplinary-based activities of the university community. The external orientation focuses upon the needs and priorities of individuals, organizations, and communities outside the university. Accordingly, the external orientation defines the outreach function and a large part of the extension function.

The outreach or extension function cuts across all dimensions of academic activity: teaching, research, and service. For example, extension teaching consists of all courses taught at off-campus locations or by distance education, and all non-credit courses or workshops. By contrast, teaching associated with the internal orientation consists of undergraduate and graduate instruction offered on campus from September to April.

Table 1 presents extension and service as discrete concepts with some overlap. Note that extension teaching and extension research are not part of the service category. Similarly, university service and community service are not part of the extension function. The one area of overlap is the category called public service or, synonymously, extension service. It is distinguished from other forms of extension in that it excludes activities that are basically forms of teaching or research. It is distinguished from other forms of service in that it includes only those activities involving the application of the academic or professional knowledge and skills that are associated with the individual's appointment at the university. In this

framework, public service is a component of the broader function of extension, as is service to academic and professional bodies.

One problem associated with this typology is that it lumps the practice of professional skills into the service category. Since this activity is a major component of the scholarly work of faculty in professional schools, many would argue that it is more closely aligned with the functions of teaching and research than with the function of service.

Another limitation of this typology is that it equates extension with outreach. Although much of extension has involved reaching out to the larger external community, this may not represent either the total nature or the fundamental defining characteristic of extension as we move into the future. For example, the notions of campus and on-campus as the grounds and buildings of a university and as the primary locus of teaching and learning are becoming increasingly less relevant. In addition, the expertise and resources of university extension/continuing education units are increasingly relevant to the needs of other units of the university community in areas such as instructional design and communications technologies.

From a Scholarship Perspective

Boyer (1990, 1996) has proposed a broader, more capacious concept of scholarship, one that encompasses the full scope of academic work by recognizing four separate, yet overlapping, functions:

1. the scholarship of *discovery* for the creation of new knowledge, which is similar to the traditional research function and consists of the free inquiry into the nature of human beings, their society, the world, and the universe;

2. the scholarship of *integration*, which involves the interpretation and synthesis, assimilation, or integration of isolated facts into new, larger, meaningful configurations—concepts, theories, models, paradigms—"putting them into perspective—making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a rewarding way " (1990, p. 18);

3. the scholarship of *application*, which is concerned with finding ways of connecting knowledge and practice—ways in which knowledge can be applied in specific contexts to overcome significant problems and by which societal problems can inform scholarly investigation; and

4. the scholarship of *teaching*, which refers to deliberate and systematic communication to share, transform, and extend knowledge with others.

Historically, scholarship has focused on discovery (research) and teaching. Scholarship of integration and application has arisen from the juxtaposition of the trend towards increasing specialization (even isolation) in the research with the trend towards increasing complexity in the contexts (problems and opportunities) in which research findings and new knowledge and technologies are applied. The result is the increasing importance of scholarly processes addressed to the knowledge development processes of integrating and applying knowledge and technology for use in specific contexts.

This typology is useful in two ways. First, it helps to broaden the concept of scholarship and to differentiate its various forms. Second, it elevates and legitimizes the scholarly activities by which faculty interpret and apply their knowledge in service to the larger community.

A Synthesis of Perspectives

The typologies presented in Table 1 and by Boyer (1990) provide a useful perspective for clarifying the concepts of extension and public service and how they relate to the broader concept of scholarship. The key elements of this perspective are summarized below.

1. Scholarship remains the main and most highly valued function or enterprise of universities. Historically, scholarship has been categorized as research and teaching. Today, in recognition of increasing specialization in the creation of knowledge at the same time as the contexts in which knowledge is applied are becoming increasingly complex, four types of scholarship are becoming accepted: discovery; integration; application; and teaching.

2. Service to the public or to society is the overriding purpose of most universities, and, as such, it pervades all aspects of a university. But universities operationally have a number of important but often competing goals, some of which are quite indirectly related to providing perceived service to the public. Therefore, to remain ever present and advanced, service to the public must itself not only be a goal of the university but also be incorporated into its formal structure and be championed within it.

3. University extension has evolved over many decades to become the major academic area of innovative practice and advanced study concerned primarily (although not exclusively) with the processes of linking university and university resources with community and community resources. This includes the linkages between theory and practice, research and application, education and industry, and teaching and learning—essentially in what has become known as the scholarship of integration and application.

4. With increasing specialization of knowledge resources, increasing complexity of problems in practice, and increasing financial constraints, the development of extension programs and services has itself become ever more complex. The result is the need for an infrastructure of facilities, equipment, technology, and expertise dedicated to the research and development (funding, design, production, promotion, provision) of a wide variety of extension programs and services.

5. Service to the public, from the public's perspective, has come to mean access to quality learning opportunities, including information, knowledge, and technologies. Access involves elements of convenience (including anytime, anyplace, any pace learning) and affordability (including absolute and relative costs). Quality involves elements of effectiveness, relevance, and recognition. Full-time students in on-campus degree-completion programs are also concerned with these access and quality issues.

6. Consequently, enhancement of the quality of and access to learning opportunities and technologies is now an important goal for many universities. This is indicated by the growth in extension-related initiatives (centres, programs, and services) to stimulate, develop, promote, and otherwise support interdisciplinary applied studies, continuing professional education, technology transfer, contract research, and so on.

7. Our definitions are not stable over time. For example, our concept of distance education is evolving and changing as information technologies emerge and become utilized. When distance education was equated with correspondence study, it was viewed as part of the extension function. However, with videoconferencing, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan can teach a class that includes cohorts of students at several other universities as well as

the cohort present in the classroom with the professor. Do we consider this to be an extension function? Another new development that challenges the stability of our definitions is the emerging concept of "service-learning" (Jacoby & Associates, 1996; Williams & Eiserman, 1997), which links student learning and development with a commitment to resolving social problems and addressing human needs. Such developments force a re-examination of our assumptions and ways of categorizing various activities. Accordingly, we must continuously reassess and redefine what we include within the extension category. Nonetheless, the typology is useful insofar as it emphasizes that there is (or at least there should be) an extension component associated with each of the activities of teaching, research, and service.

8. The service category presented in Table 1 excludes community service (also known as civic service) activities that do not utilize the academic or professional expertise of individual faculty members as they are not "*academic*" functions. Boyer (1990) proposed that:

> . . . a sharp distinction must be drawn between citizenship activities and projects that related to scholarship itself. . . . To be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied directly to one's special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity. (p. 22)

As Schomberg and Farmer (1994) noted, however, what is community service for one faculty member may be public service for another. Service on a public school board may be community service for a biology professor but could be public professional service for a professor of educational finance. In a similar fashion, we must distinguish between the university's extension function and its public relations function. Extension activities are almost certain to generate good public relations, and although such outcomes are welcomed, they should not be considered one of the basic purposes of extension.

9. Universities have established clear categories of activity that are recognized as part of the teaching function (such as teaching degree-credit courses and supervision of graduate students) and the research function (such as refereed publications and research grants), which is very useful in assessing individual competence and performance in these categories. Because of the innovative and

continually evolving nature of extension programs, services, and activities, it may be impossible to establish such reasonably standardized and commonly recognized categories for extension. In the meantime, we need to present more detailed descriptions of extension efforts. Otherwise, worthy extension activities risk being interpreted as a series of personal initiatives unrelated to accepted scholarly functions and institutional and program objectives.

Conclusion

Full development of the university extension function and full realization of its potential to help universities adapt to or, indeed, transform demanding challenges of the new millennium are limited by superficial, ambiguous, conflicting, and confusing understandings of the basic elements of the function. A new more comprehensive understanding of university extension is needed, one that is derived from the public service mission and scholarly functions of universities and that accounts for the changing public expectations, emerging technologies, and a growing, but increasingly competitive, market (Votruba, 1996).

Attempts to define extension by classifying activities no longer work. For example, the on-campus/off-campus dichotomy is becoming increasingly irrelevant in the context of the virtual campus. Extension involves research, teaching, and professional service activities, but each of these categories includes more than extension activities. Moreover, activities that may be appropriately classified as being extension at one institution or for one individual, at one point in time, may be a regular academic activity or a non-academic activity at another institution, for another individual, at another point in time.

In order to effectively understand, describe, and compare university extension to other related concepts and terms, it needs to be understood in terms of its basic intent and academic functions. In particular, extension needs to be seen in terms of a university's public service mission and goals and its scholarly functions. For example, university extension is the academic field of innovative practice and advanced study concerned with extending the knowledge resources and the scholarly functions of discovery, integration, teaching, and application beyond a university's existing degree-completion programs and related services.

The fundamental characteristic of university extension is its focus upon

the needs of the external community and a commitment to utilize institutional resources and expertise to respond appropriately to those needs.

This discussion provides a framework for a shared perspective on the concepts of extension in the context of scholarship and public service. It is important for university administrators and extension practitioners to use that perspective to identify the elements of an institutional strategy to support and strengthen the extension function so we can, once again, claim it is a primary mission of the university.

END NOTES

1. University of Saskatchewan Mission Statement, 1993.

2. University Standards for Promotion and Tenure, University of Saskatchewan, adopted May 1979 and revised April 1985 and February 1989.

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