

## **Faculty Engagement in Public Scholarship: A Motivation Systems Theory Perspective**

Carol L. Colbeck and Lisa D. Weaver

### **Abstract**

This study used the lens of motivation systems theory to explore why research university faculty engage in public scholarship. Faculty engaged in public scholarship integrate their research, teaching, and service to address societal needs. Analysis of the motivational patterns (including goals, capability beliefs, context beliefs, and emotions) of twelve faculty actively engaged in public scholarship at a single public research university is used to identify leverage points for other faculty and administrators who wish to support, increase, or enhance their own and others' engagement in public scholarship.

### **Introduction**

During a period when faculty feel ever-increasing pressures to produce more publications, secure more external funding, use innovative pedagogies in the classroom, and engage undergraduates in research, all while making their teaching and service “scholarly,” encouragement to conduct public scholarship may well be perceived by many as yet another impossible expectation. Nevertheless, Checkoway (2001, 143) imagines “faculty whose research promotes public scholarship relating their work to the pressing problems of society; whose teaching includes community-based learning that develops substantive knowledge, cultivates practical skills, and strengthens social responsibility; whose service draws upon their professional expertise for the welfare of society; and whose efforts promote a vibrant public culture at their institution.” Checkoway’s imaginings indicate the potential benefits public scholarship holds for students, faculty, universities, and society.

Public scholarship is “scholarly activity generating new knowledge through academic reflection on issues of community engagement. It integrates research, teaching, and service. It does not assume that useful knowledge simply flows outward from the university to the larger community. It recognizes that new knowledge is created in its application in the field, and therefore benefits the teaching and research mission of the university” (Yapa 2006, 73). Thus, while similar to common conceptions of service-learning or civic engagement, public scholarship is neither supplemental to primary teaching or research responsibilities, nor can it be accomplished

by simply adding community service and reflection components to the courses faculty teach. Public scholarship reframes academic work as an inseparable whole in which teaching, research, and service components are teased apart only to see how each informs and enriches the others, and faculty members use the integrated whole of their work to address societal needs (*Colbeck and Michael 2006b; Kellogg Commission 2000*).

Despite benefits of public scholarship for faculty, universities, and communities, encouraging, evaluating, and rewarding the work of faculty members who do public scholarship remains problematic (*O'Meara 2002; O'Meara and Rice 2005*). Moreover, most

---

*“Public scholarship reframes academic work as an inseparable whole in which teaching, research, and service components are teased apart only to see how each informs and enriches the others . . .”*

---

prior research about faculty involvement in service-learning, community-based research, or engaged scholarship has been atheoretical. An exception is Ward's (2003) review of prior research in this area in which she categorizes faculty members' reasons for engaging in community service as attributable to intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Among the intrinsic reasons for engagement, Ward lists per-

sonal values, prior involvement, sense of responsibility, nature of one's discipline, feeling of belonging, and feeling that one's work has purpose. Extrinsic reasons include job descriptions, rewards (such as grants, release time, and cash awards), and recognition and enhanced reputation. Lack of such extrinsic rewards is often cited as a reason why more faculty are not involved in service (*Ward 2003*).

A simple intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomy provides insufficient theoretical basis for understanding faculty motivation to engage in public scholarship, however, because of lack of clarity in the terms and conflicting opinions about the relationship between the two types of motivation. Intrinsic motivation has been defined several ways by organizational psychologists, leading to confusion about how it can be distinguished from extrinsic motivation. “Advancement” and “recognition,” for example, have been classified as intrinsic rewards in some studies and as extrinsic rewards in others (*Dyer and Parker 1975*). Some definitions posit that intrinsic motivation originates from internal needs and feelings existing prior to a particular work situation (*Slocum 1971*). Others posit that

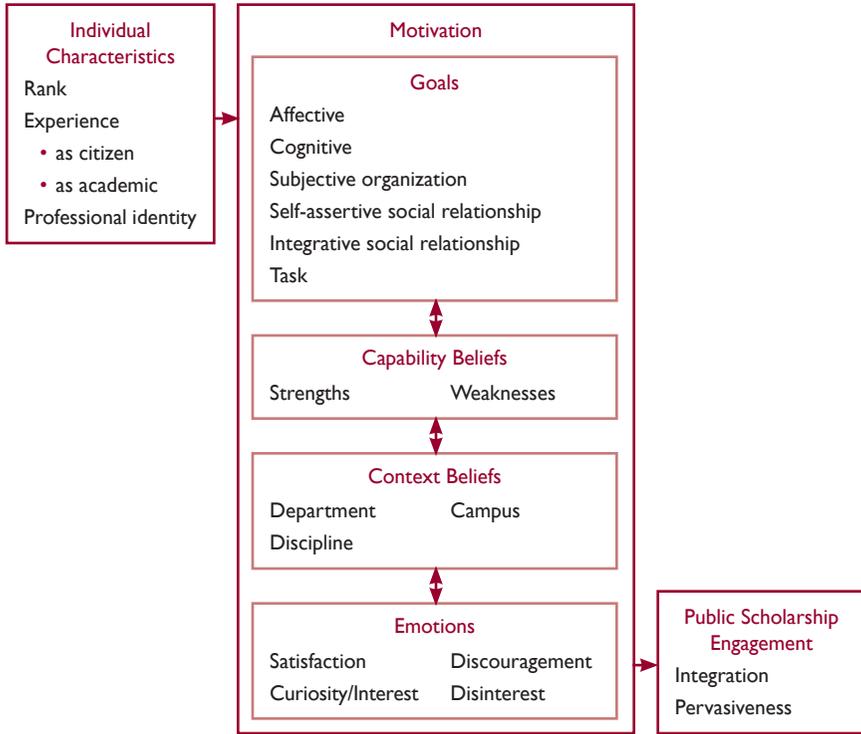
a person's current intrinsic motivation is influenced by past experiences, social context, and current perceptions of extrinsic rewards (Dyer and Parker 1975). Not only do theorists disagree about whether intrinsic motivation must precede an individual's current situation, they also differ about whether intrinsic and extrinsic motivation complement or conflict with each other. When applying expectancy theory to understand professors' motivation to teach and conduct research, Mowday (1982) assumed that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are additive; together, they could increase individuals' motivation. In contrast, Bess (1977) and McKeachie (1982) asserted that professors' joy in teaching for its own sake would decrease if they pursued external rewards for that aspect of their academic work. Thus, improved understanding of faculty motivation to engage in public scholarship requires a more sophisticated theoretical lens.

Motivation systems theory provides such a lens. Martin Ford (1992) developed the comprehensive theory of motivation after conducting a thoughtful review of scores of other motivation theories. Motivation systems theory (MST) posits that motivation involves interactions between one's personal goals, capability beliefs (perceptions of one's own skills), context beliefs (perceptions of whether or not one's environment provides needed support), and emotional arousal processes (feelings that help one mobilize and deploy energy). We used MST to understand why faculty members are motivated to engage in public scholarship at a single public research university. Lessons learned from their examples may help identify leverage points for other faculty and administrators who wish to support, increase, or enhance their own and others' engagement in public scholarship.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study, depicted in figure 1, integrates MST with prior research about reasons for faculty involvement in service-learning, community-based research, or engaged scholarship as well as prior research on academic work roles.

*Individual characteristics* are likely to shape faculty members' motivation to engage in public scholarship. In their review of prior literature about what influences faculty to participate in service-learning and community-based research, Colbeck and Michael (2006a) noted other researchers have found associations between the demographic characteristics of rank, experience, discipline,

**Figure 1: Motivation Systems Theory and Faculty Engagement in Public Scholarship**

gender, and race and faculty involvement in community service. In particular, concern about evaluations for the critical up-or-out tenure decision may inhibit many tenure-seeking faculty from scholarly engagement in the community (O'Meara 2005). In addition, experiences as citizens and as members of the academic profession may influence faculty motivation for engaged academic work (Boyte 2004). Identity is “what it means to be who one is” (Burke 2003, 1). Faculty members may either perceive their professional identities as fragmented between their teaching, research, and service roles or as an integrated whole (Colbeck 2008). Those who perceive connections and integration between their roles may be more likely to engage in public scholarship (Colbeck and Michael 2006b).

*Personal goals* represent the consequences an individual is trying to achieve and direct the processes the individual uses to produce the consequences. Ford (1992) developed a taxonomy of twenty-four goals, arranged in six categories: *affective* (entertainment, tranquility, happiness, bodily sensations, and physical well-being), *cognitive* (exploration, understanding, intellectual creativity, posi-

tive self-evaluation), *subjective organization* (unity, transcendence), *self-assertive social relationship* (individuality, self-determination, superiority, resource acquisition), *integrative social relationship* (belongingness, social responsibility, equity, resource provision), and *task goals* (mastery, task creativity, management, material gain, safety). Some of these goals may be more associated with engagement in public scholarship than others. Faculty members who value integrative social relationship goals such as social responsibility, for example, might be more likely to engage in public scholarship than faculty holding strong self-assertive social relationship goals such as superiority and resource acquisition.

Goals alone are not enough to shape motivation. Individuals must also believe they have the personal agency to attain their goals. According to Ford (1992), two sets of beliefs about personal agency interact to influence motivation. *Capability beliefs* are evaluations of whether one has the necessary skills to attain a goal. Perceptions of one's skill strengths and weaknesses may shape public scholarship involvement. Thus, a faculty member who perceives herself adept at communicating with multiple stakeholders might be more likely to engage in public scholarship than one who feels most comfortable talking with academic peers. Even an individual with the necessary skills may find a goal difficult to attain if he perceives that his organizational context is not supportive or has inadequate resources. Prior experiences outside and inside academe are likely to shape faculty members' beliefs about their capabilities to engage in public scholarship (Bandura 1977). *Context beliefs* are evaluations of whether one's environment will support goal attainment; they involve congruence of personal goals with organizational goals (Maehr and Braskamp 1986), perceptions of availability of resources, and perceptions of social support and rewards. Faculty members' perceptions of their department, disciplinary, and campus contexts may differ, and each might influence engagement in public scholarship.

Interactions between capability and context beliefs yield *personal agency belief patterns* (Ford 1992). A person with positive capability and context beliefs, for example, is likely to have a *robust* pattern characterized by a strong sense of purpose and optimistic outlook. In contrast, one with negative capability and context beliefs is unlikely to have much expectation of success. A person with positive capability beliefs but neutral or variable context beliefs is likely to have a *tenacious* pattern, and the strength to deal with contextual challenges. A *modest* personal agency belief pattern associated with positive context beliefs and moderate or variable capability beliefs

provides an opportunity for learning for the individual who feels personally fallible but supported by the environment. In contrast, individuals with positive capability beliefs and negative context beliefs may exhibit an *antagonistic* pattern and be more likely to blame the context rather than themselves for problems. A *discouraged* pattern is associated with negative context beliefs and modest capability beliefs, and an individual with this pattern is unlikely to anticipate making progress in the current context.

Goals, capability beliefs, and context beliefs set the stage for the fourth component, emotional arousal. *Emotions* are subjective states that reveal the extent of success, problems, or failure an individual anticipates in relation to a goal. Emotions become most salient when immediate, vigorous action is required. Of the four sets of emotions categorized by Ford (1992), two are most relevant to faculty motivation to engage in public scholarship. The first set involves instrumental emotions that help regulate the initiation, continuation, repetition, or termination of behaviors. They include satisfaction, discouragement, curiosity or interest, and disinterest or apathy. The second set of relevant emotions are those that help regulate efforts to cope with potentially disrupting or damaging circumstances. They include surprise, annoyance or anger, wariness or fear, and dislike or disgust.

A desired consequence of motivation is *achievement*, the attainment of a personally or socially valued goal within a specific context. For this study, we defined achievement as a faculty member's full engagement in public scholarship in terms of role integration and pervasiveness. *Role integration* involves whether and how a faculty member synthesizes research, teaching, and civic engagement as he or she engages in public scholarship activities (Colbeck and Michael 2006b). The extent to which public scholarship affects all aspects of faculty work activities is an indicator of *pervasiveness*. We used Ford's (1992) motivation systems theory to explore the reasons why twelve faculty members actively engage in public scholarship at the Pennsylvania State University.

## **University Context**

An ever-growing group of faculty and administrators at the Pennsylvania State University are enacting public scholarship. They are committed to integrating the teaching, research, and service aspects of their work in service to the community. An initial small core group worked with Associate Vice President and Senior Dean for Undergraduate Education Jeremy Cohen in 1999 to articu-

late goals for recruiting other faculty, creating opportunities for meaningful participation, developing a center to foster public scholarship, and sharing public scholarship in ways that recognized faculty members' integrated scholarly contributions (*Cohen and Yapa 2003*). Small grants funded by various campus offices and the Pennsylvania Campus Compact were offered to faculty who incorporated public scholarship into their undergraduate courses. Awardees also became Public Scholarship Associates. By 2006, the Public Scholarship Associates included nearly one hundred faculty from the main University Park campus and several of Penn State's nineteen commonwealth campuses. Disciplines represented included geography, philosophy, electrical engineering, rural sociology, political science, communications, and higher education. Public Scholarship Associates met one to two times per semester to interact with community representatives, oversee the undergraduate minor in civic engagement, explore of the meaning and practice of public scholarship, and plan undergraduate poster exhibitions and day-long seminars on public scholarship.

## **Methods**

The qualitative methods for this exploratory study involved interviews with twelve Penn State faculty members engaged in public scholarship. We hoped that lessons learned from faculty already doing public scholarship would help us identify leverage points for encouraging more faculty to engage in the practice.

Identification of likely participants was facilitated by the first author's active membership in the Public Scholarship Associates. Faculty invited to participate in the study had current and/or prior grants for public scholarship courses or were known to be actively engaged in the practice. We also selected participants for several dimensions of variation. The sample included six men and six women. Four were full professors, four were associates, two were assistant professors on the tenure track, and two held the title of assistant professor but were not on the tenure track. Two participants were ethnic minorities. Ten participants worked at Penn State's main University Park research campus; two held positions at smaller branch campuses. Three held (or had recently held) positions with administrative and budgetary authority over other faculty; two additional participants were center directors, and a sixth was very active in faculty governance. Participants' home departments included engineering, education, nutrition, geography, landscape architecture, psychology, agricultural economics, English, and women's studies.

We conducted a sixty- to ninety-minute interview with each participant to elicit information about their prior experiences with civic engagement, how they identify themselves professionally, and their perceptions of their disciplinary and campus contexts—including the impact of tenure. We also asked about their own goals for their academic work, their beliefs about their work strengths and weaknesses, and their beliefs about whether their work contexts were supportive of public scholarship. Finally, we asked how often their research, teaching, and civic engagement roles inform each other and whether their teaching of one public scholarship class has spilled over into other areas of their academic work. Interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were coded and thematically analyzed using the concepts from motivation systems theory to construct a motivation map for each participant and to ascertain motivation patterns across all participants.

## **Findings**

In this section, we describe the major themes that emerged when analyzing each motivational concept, then compare characteristics that reveal important differences in their motivation maps.

### **Prior experiences**

We asked each participant to describe prior experiences as citizens and as academics that contributed to their current engagement in public scholarship. Family and community groups were primary shapers of these faculty members' current civic engagement.<sup>1</sup> Eight of the twelve participants indicated the importance of their families or family situations, such as the impact of being first in the family to attend college, appreciating support provided after a parent's death, or being "raised going to peace marches and protests." Of these eight, five shared lengthy anecdotes about their fathers, mothers, or grandparents who introduced "the gratification of engaging people and being selfless" or modeled "the way that he listened to people, the way that he valued and respected people, the way that he entered his perspective into the conversation and his high comfort with the ambiguity of a representative, collective decision-making process" or described what it was like to live with the legacy of a war long after the conflict was over. One who was born to privilege was encouraged to help others; three born to working-class families recognized the comparative privilege they had attained as academics and now wanted to empower others.

Good and bad experiences with community groups also influenced participants to use their faculty positions to make a positive difference. While volunteering with a community group to refurbish homes in the inner city, one participant realized that type of effort would not help stop a crushing generational cycle of poverty. He reflected on his father's encouragement to work for social justice: "I remember the conversation that I had with my dad. I prepared all my life just for situations like this but here I am painting a bloody kitchen. What difference would it make to the life of this girl?" The participant then began an intellectual journey to determine how he could use his intellectual skills to address social inequities through public scholarship. Another participant felt encouraged to question authority for the first time when she enrolled in a women's studies course as a young mother. While three said they "have always had a sense of doing things for the community," two described very negative experiences that engendered a desire to facilitate communication processes that would foster genuine democratic engagement.

Participants' ranks were reflected in the different ways they perceived that their academic experiences contributed to their public scholarship. Two senior faculty acknowledged their early career focus was primarily on disciplinary research, but they now had the time and interest to refocus on community-

based research and learning. An offer of external funding to replicate a discipline-specific community engagement effort led one administrator to adopt public scholarship as an agenda for his department. Two senior faculty saw the philosophy animating public scholarship as a way to challenge taken-for-granted notions of power in dominant theories in their fields; similarly, four relatively early-career faculty saw their public scholarship teaching and research as activism in the academy. One participant was already engaged in public scholarship when she realized that not only was it research, but her work had demonstrable impact on people's lives, even when she did not publish the work in standard ways.

---

*"One participant was already engaged in public scholarship when she realized that not only was it research, but her work had demonstrable impact on people's lives, even when she did not publish the work in standard ways."*

---

## **Professional identity**

We began each interview by asking the faculty members to tell us who they were as professors of their respective disciplines. Rather than using traditional academic categories, this group of faculty described themselves as having multiple professional identities in terms of discipline, roles, and positions. An overwhelming majority—ten of the twelve—described their work as interdisciplinary. Three had joint appointments. Another described her work as the interface between four disciplines, and a fifth said he has worked for years “at the interface of physical sciences and social sciences.” Other participants described collaborations with colleagues across the disciplines that either led to or resulted from their involvement in public scholarship.

Several participants also perceived connections across their teaching, research, and service roles. One said that although academics often “compartmentalize teaching, research and service as three parts of our job, . . . I have just always had a hard time separating those three things. I can’t separate them and because I teach all the time, I do science all the time, and . . . I would not do those things . . . if I didn’t think it was going to do something good for the community.” Similarly, a center director with a joint appointment in two departments who fostered connections between people, ideas, and disciplines noted the “synthesis” between his teaching, research, and outreach roles as well as his academic, practitioner, and administrative positions. Participants’ comments about their identities revealed that they were complex individuals who facilitated interpersonal connections and intellectual connections in their work. Their descriptions of their prior experiences and professional identities were helpful for understanding their goals, capability beliefs, context beliefs, and emotions.

## **Goals**

We asked participants to talk about goals in two different ways: the most important purposes of their work and the professional goals they would like to accomplish in the next five years. We combined both responses to categorize their goals according to the broad categories in Ford’s typology: affective, cognitive, subjective organization, self-assertive social relationship, integrative social relationship, and task. The overwhelming majority of goals volunteered by participants were easily categorized as integrative social relationship goals, which serve to maintain or promote other people or social groups (*Ford 1992*). Participants sometimes expressed these goals in general terms: “I would like to do things that have an impact and matter” or “I am here to make the world

a better place.” Some targeted their integrative social relationship goals toward one academic role, such as teaching: “To make good citizens out of undergraduates and grad students so they have a sense of their responsibilities more than their rights.” Other participants recognized multiple results possible from a single goal, such as “actually delivering the product to them that they are impressed with, and that extends our reputation as a department, it extends the goodwill for the campus and it provides a wonderful community service that these people, a lot of community would not have otherwise.” Three compared the relative importance of their current public scholarship goals to their former goals for publishing research. As one said, “I’ve always wanted my research to have more meaning than five academics reading an article.”

The next largest number of goal content statements were cognitive in nature and concerned with the intellectual work involved in all aspects of public scholarship, such as developing theories, developing public scholarship as “a new epistemology, a different way of thinking, a different way of solving problems” or “dealing with complex issues and complex situations.” Some participants articulated specific task goals for their work, including for their current public scholarship projects such as data collection or securing grants. A few discussed self-assertive relationship goals, which are associated with maintaining or promoting the self. As Ford indicates, individuals may have both strong self-assertive and integrative social goals. One tenure-track assistant professor with a strong activist agenda also felt a strong responsibility as primary family income provider, so attaining tenure was a key goal. A recently tenured participant wanted promotion to full professor, in part to validate his public scholarship. In contrast, two participants voiced self-assertive goals of leaving the university because they perceived incongruence between their own goals and those of their work contexts. None of the participants mentioned goals that could be categorized as affective or subjective organization goals.

### **Capability beliefs**

Individuals’ capability beliefs “reflect their confidence or doubts about any of a number of personal strengths or weaknesses” (Ford 1992, 128). Strengths in common volunteered by several of these public scholars include communication skills, relevant experiences, various ways of making connections, and passion. Many participants felt that facilitating communication between university and community groups, between students, faculty, and community members, and within any type of diverse group is essential to effective public scholarship. Success and enjoyment in this work flowed

from their abilities to listen, synthesize, and translate. For example, one participant described why he felt his ability to see different perspectives enhanced his “comfort with the idea that there are indeed multiple legitimate interests around any issue, any public issue and public space, and that those interests need to be respected. I think also, I hope that I am a good listener which I think you have to be to do that work and furthermore you need to have the ability to integrate and synthesize the perspectives that are put on the table.” Another participant valued his ability to articulate the meaning of his public scholarship to students. “My strengths are that I can see this issue fairly clearly and I can explain it to even freshmen who understand the argument; they are persuaded.” Communication in service for students’ learning—even to the extent of being “a shameless promoter”—helped another participant build her public scholarship agenda. She said, “I go out and talk to everybody. . . . I don’t perceive myself as being particularly outgoing but when I get going talking about what my students do and what kind of students I have, I have wonderful students and that to me is one of the strengths.” Fostering meaningful student learning with public scholarship was a strength voiced by several participants. Others perceived that their relevant experiences are strengths, including “real world experience with lots of the topics that I talk about in class,” “having been a practitioner before coming into academia,” and “being reasonably well-connected because I have been around for a while and because of that connectivity, [students] get opportunities . . . they wouldn’t normally get.” A strength voiced directly by only two participants seemed to resonate throughout the interviews of all: passion. A tenure-track assistant professor, for example, described how her passion helped her meet requirements for tenure even while doing public scholarship:

I just think that if you do work that you are passionate about, that that translates into good things, and . . . I’m working on issues that are really important to me, otherwise I wouldn’t be doing good work, and I wouldn’t be publishing in really good journals, because the passion wouldn’t come through.

Participants in this study were able to see the good side of their weaknesses. A couple, in fact, even said that their strengths were sometimes also their weaknesses. A few found that the passion—articulated or not—that animated their public scholarship work inspired some students, but was rejected by others. One used to

worry, “Do I really have the ability to motivate students to think beyond their own lives and how do I do that? So what I like as my strength I also think is my limitation because I don’t reach every student, it’s very clear that I don’t.” Faculty engaged in public scholarship are very busy, if this group is any indication, because some perceived that not working fast enough, taking too much time with students, or not being able to say no were among their weaknesses. Several also allowed themselves room to grow as they described weaknesses they were working to overcome, such as experience with teams, giving feedback to students effectively, or learning more about networks and making contacts.

Individually and as a whole, this group of faculty seemed to have a strong sense of their own abilities to accomplish public scholarship, whether or not they perceived public scholarship as additional to or as an integral part of their regular faculty responsibilities. They all worked at the same university; however, their perceptions of their work contexts were more variable and less favorable than their self-perceptions.

### **Context beliefs**

We asked participants to discuss their perceptions of the degree to which their department, disciplinary, and university contexts support public scholarship. Beliefs about support from department contexts ranged from very positive to very negative. Four participants perceived positive support for public scholarship in their departments, six described department support as moderate or variable, and two perceived only negative messages within their departments. The participant who perhaps perceived the most positive support reported that an expectation of equal attention to teaching, research, and service for evaluation is reality rather than rhetoric in his department. Not only is it “part of the ethos in this department,” but his public scholarship attracted a higher than typical amount of grant dollars to the department, so he said that bringing in resources “may explain the acceptance.” Another participant described his department and college as “extremely supportive and even aggressive in pursuing these sorts of opportunities.” The process of mounting a major international public scholarship effort has been facilitated by deans as well as with financial resources from both colleges where one participant has joint appointments, so she perceives the climate for public scholarship “is good in both places.” In contrast, six participants perceived mixed messages or messages that have changed over time. A senior faculty member described a long tradition of commitment to the

public work of the university, but during “the last ten years there has been increasingly a lack of support.” A tenure-seeking faculty member felt well-supported by her department chair for her traditional academic work but perceived no recognition of her public scholarship in a pretenure review. Another participant found similar benign neglect: “The department doesn’t really do anything to get in the way; they have been very helpful.” A department head trying to mobilize faculty interest in public scholarship provided an interesting and different perspective on this issue when he said:

I think that there is a receptiveness to the ideas, quickly and universally to some extent. I think that this is true both within the department; in other words, most faculty or students you talk to think it’s a good idea. . . . If you talk to the dean, the dean is very enthusiastic. . . . Now, when you get down to brass tacks of funding and time allocation, I think it takes a different slant. I probably have a dozen faculty in the department who are interested in principle, but I only have about two who will actually go out and teach that [public scholarship course]. . . . And I find that kind of interesting so there are like two sides of that coin, you know, there is, the ideas are very quickly received, the projects are always interesting, people like to see them, but when it comes down to getting people involved to do it, it is a challenge.

Two faculty found nothing positive in their department climates for public scholarship. One described an unhappy department in which “there are strong disincentives for spending time with students, there are strong disincentives as well for collaboration even to the point where revealing what you are studying to another colleague can be dangerous in some situations because of competitiveness.” Similarly, a nontenure-track faculty member felt she was doing more than tenure-track faculty, but her department head did not recognize or reward her efforts.

Disciplinary contexts were more supportive of public scholarship than department contexts, according to the nine participants who discussed this issue. Five reported positive climates, and two others perceived indicators of important and favorable changes. One perceived variable messages within his discipline, and another felt the disciplinary climate for public scholarship was negative. Several of those who perceived a positive disciplinary climate associated it with the interdisciplinary nature of their fields. Said one,

“So because what I teach to my students is interdisciplinarity, I am enabled to do that through my discipline.” Perhaps even more telling were four faculty who reported evidence of positive change in their fields. Two participants from very different disciplines described similar scenarios at national conferences. Both described sessions with research leaders in their fields talking about public scholarship, and as one said, “it was an 8:00 a.m. session, the room was packed, and it was a big room. And I think it’s important that the other people that were on this were also very big names.” Another participant from a third discipline said, “More and more of the leaders in the discipline are applied people who write books and are really trying to give things away and I think that’s a wonderful shift, so I think in our discipline the expectations are very slowly changing away from separate teaching, research, and service and by service really meaning be on a committee not serving the community.” The participant who perceived mixed messages had received a grant for his public scholarship, but had two manuscripts rejected by the education journal in his discipline. The participant who perceived a negative disciplinary climate for public scholarship said it was discouraging because “a lot of professors won’t think that way because they themselves have never been exposed to public scholarship.”

Participants also perceived the university context as somewhat more supportive of public scholarship than their department contexts. Most of the participants mentioned they valued the interdisciplinary connections with colleagues afforded by occasional Public Scholarship Associates meetings and efforts made by Associate Vice President Jeremy Cohen to champion the philosophy and practice at Penn State. Three mentioned that a five-year-old policy change in university promotion and tenure policy to recognize outreach scholarship was beginning to have a positive effect on some decisions. A couple of participants who had earned university awards and funding from several university offices for their highly visible public scholarship work felt the university was moving in a good direction. One said, “I think it may be somewhat of an embryonic atmosphere right now, we don’t know where we are all going to go with this yet it seems like everyone is on the band wagon, let me put it that way. Everyone is on the band wagon, where is that wagon going to go? It is going to take people to really kind of start steering where they are going to bring this, but I think it’s a very exciting time at Penn State.” While five described a positive climate, another five found the same university climate only moderately or variably supportive of public scholarship. A faculty member working at a

branch campus said that despite the strong support of the campus chancellor, few other faculty or administrators were even aware of public scholarship. A participant at the main campus said that the university emphasis on securing externally funded research inhibited public scholarship. He said, "What you don't see, are probably, you know, the hundreds of projects that were never done, because they could not fit within the institutional structure of research." A participant who was active in university governance identified gaps in university support.

I think you have to have top-down support, there is absolutely no doubt, and then you have to have the grass-roots efforts. You have to have individual faculty say, "Yes it counts" when you are on the P and T committee, so that's got to be there. But there is just a whole lot of middle administrators who just don't get it, and I am not sure they are going to. They just sort of roll their eyes. And some senior professors too, you know, who sort of, took a more traditional track, were told, "Don't you dare do this." And so now they just keep repeating that mantra. And so I think we have a way to go, but I am very optimistic about it.

## **Emotions**

Emotions associated with their public scholarship involvement were expressed by participants directly in words and indirectly in their tone, demeanor, and descriptions of their work and work contexts. The four emotions expressed most often by participants included satisfaction/joy, curiosity/interest, wariness, and resentment. Two participants who perceived no positive support from their work contexts felt discouraged and resentful. A tenure-track faculty member who felt she must delay some of her natural desire to fully engage in public scholarship until after she received tenure expressed wariness. Eight participants, particularly those who felt their research and teaching were invigorated or changed in exciting new directions because of public scholarship, expressed curiosity/interest. All participants found satisfaction and joy to varying degrees from engaging in public scholarship. Their comments ranged from a simple "It's fun!" to effusiveness: "I found something that I really love to do and that I want to get out of bed in the morning and come in every summer day, and that I kind of feel like I have made an impact on a couple students, I have made an impact on a few other faculty, and I have certainly grown myself."

## Integration

One of the outcomes of interest was how participants viewed linkages between their teaching, research, and service roles as a result of engaging in public scholarship. Three participants initially identified themselves in terms of their integrated work roles. Five others recognized holistic connections as they discussed their public scholarship. One told us that public scholarship was the only thing that links all his academic work. Other examples include:

Public Scholarship comes into my research, my research comes into my public scholarship. It's really hard to create a dividing line between my public scholarship, my teaching, and my research. They have all kind of morphed into this one thing.

Research, teaching, public mission; research, public mission, teaching—to me it's just all a dynamic seamless web of interdependency.

I think my teaching has always been integrated, obviously my service has always been integrated, but I think it's more recently that I have tried to do that more with my research.

Two faculty participants perceived public scholarship as linking more strongly to their teaching than to research—a construction similar to service-learning. Another perceived links more strongly with research—a construction similar to community-based research.

## Pervasiveness

We were also interested in the extent to which participants limited the time and energy they devoted to public scholarship or perceived public scholarship as their approach to faculty work as a whole. Eight participants indicated that public scholarship pervaded their academic work, and some gave detailed examples about courses, writing projects, community collaborations, and administrative work. Others made simple declarations, such as “Well, I am sure there is something I do where it isn't, at the micro kind of level, but I think it is a theme that runs through my work” or “My professional goal is public scholarship.” Two participants described changes they were beginning to make in the way they did some of their work to incorporate more public scholarship. One described two specific ways that he was incorporating ideas from public scholarship into new professional development programs

he was planning for undergraduate majors in his field. Another faculty member shared that he considered incorporating public scholarship into more of his classes only because of encouragement from one of his graduate students. The faculty members who were more focused either on service-learning or on community-based research were less likely to feel that public scholarship pervaded all their academic work.

One participant described a potential benefit of allowing public scholarship to pervade one's work: for her, rather than increasing her workload, it was "something that has made my life so much easier."

### **Cross-Case Analysis: Motivation Maps**

We created maps of the relationships between motivation systems theory concepts for each individual participant, which allowed us to make sense of how motivation had led each to their current state at the time of the interview and to make some educated guesses about how their engagement in public scholarship was likely to affect future career choices. Ford's articulation of personal agency belief patterns (interactions between capability and context beliefs) guided this part of the analysis. Although all participants had been selected for their active engagement in public scholarship, we found interesting variations in their motivation maps that suggested patterns ranging from a low "discouraged" to a high "robust." (See table 1.)

**Table 1. Public Scholarship and Participants' Personal Agency Belief Patterns**

Context beliefs	Capability beliefs		
	Strong	Moderate/Variable	Weak
Positive	Robust 3	Modest 2	Fragile 0
Neutral/Variable	Tenacious 4	Vulnerable 1	Self-defeating 0
Negative	Antagonistic 1	Discouraged 1	Hopeless 0

*Adapted from Ford 1992*

The participant who exhibited a "discouraged" pattern identified primarily as a teacher and focused chiefly on integrative social goals related to teaching; she had moderate capability beliefs, and very negative context beliefs about her department, discipline, and university. Public scholarship remained on the periphery of her

academic work. She anticipated taking early retirement. She said of public scholarship:

It's a tool for making, helping students to see the validity of what they are studying, the value of what they are studying, and for cementing the information in a much more valuable way. Now, do I want to take that farther professionally? If there were any rewards for me I might, but there are none.

Leaving the university was on the agenda of another participant whose public scholarship fully integrated her work roles and pervaded much of her professional life. Although she had strongly positive capability beliefs, she perceived little that was supportive from her work contexts. After trying, without success, to effect change in her work contexts, this participant was beginning to explore other places to practice public scholarship. Her motivation map fit the “antagonistic” pattern—that is, having a general sense of one's own adequacy but distrust of the environment.

The motivation maps of three participants fit somewhere between a “vulnerable” and a “modest” pattern. Both were characterized by moderate capability beliefs, but the vulnerable pattern also has moderate or variable context beliefs. The mixed messages from the environment probably would not dramatically inhibit progress toward goals, but people with this pattern are likely to feel anxious or worried and may be a bit cautious in setting goals. The modest pattern benefits from positive context beliefs, and the resulting sense of security may establish good conditions for learning or new skills development. The three participants fitting these patterns included an assistant, an associate, and a full professor/administrator, each with family and prior community service experiences. Each acknowledged still having much to learn about their roles and were eager to engage in that learning with their public scholarship. They did not see giving up public scholarship to meet other goals favored by their contexts as a viable option. As one said:

It's definitely not a way of helping me be efficient. It definitely is extra work. And yet, if I didn't do the extra work, I don't think that I'd be as successful in terms of my writing because that's kind of what energizes me.

The “tenacious” pattern fit four participants with strongly positive capability beliefs and neutral or variable context beliefs. According to Ford (1992), this pattern has high motivational power because individuals with it are likely to persist under challenging conditions. In fact, because they are not surprised by negative aspects of their contexts, individuals with this pattern are likely to be prepared to surmount them. The sense of resilience was articulated by one participant:

I can pretty much bounce back from very, very bad things and barriers and say is there a way around this and I think that adaptivity or resiliency is something I try to teach my students. I try to encourage my colleagues to have it as well. It's like sitting home and crying about it isn't going to do any good. Either beat down the door, or find another door, or knock quietly and ask to be invited, or do something—but don't give up.

All ranks were distributed across the tenacious pattern, from nontenure-track assistant professor to associate to senior full professors. Their public scholarship involvement was foreshadowed by their family and community experiences. All four had undertaken some administrative or faculty leadership role in addition to their academic responsibilities. They felt both intellectual curiosity and satisfaction with their work. For two of the four, public scholarship integrated and pervaded their work. The others were finding ways to increase their public scholarship involvement.

Three faculty fit a “robust” pattern, characterized by strongly positive capability and context beliefs. Motivation is strong for people with this pattern, who set high goals and maintain expectations they can fulfill them. They are likely to perceive setbacks as temporary and not predictive of future problems (Ford 1992). Faculty with robust patterns included a tenure-track assistant professor, an associate professor, and a full professor. Similar to the tenacious group, each had assumed some level of administrative responsibility. All identified strongly as interdisciplinary and had multiple goals, including integrative social goals. Intellectual curiosity and overall sense of satisfaction and joy permeated discussion of their work. Public scholarship integrated and pervaded the academic work of two, and one was more focused on research but was exploring bringing public scholarship into at least one of his courses. Participants with this pattern also talked of how institutional support for public scholarship intensified their commitment

to the university as well as to their academic work. An associate professor said,

And to be honest with you, that's why I'm still here. I mean, here, because of this commitment. . . . You know, to be honest with you, tenure was not my main motivation. So, but it's this commitment, and wouldn't be at any other, as long as institutions support this commitment, I am happy as a clam.

## Discussion

Viewing the work of these faculty through the lens of motivation systems theory (Ford 1992) challenged the notion that simple solutions for encouraging more faculty engagement in community work, such as those suggested through an intrinsic/extrinsic motivation lens, are likely to have much effect. A focus on intrinsic motivation, for example, suggests that only those faculty with relevant life experiences and prior interest in community matters are likely to become involved in public scholarship. Many of the participants in this study did, indeed, have prior experiences and interests that fostered their engagement, but others became involved relatively late in their academic careers and for a variety of reasons. Similarly, extrinsic motivation focuses attention on the faculty evaluation and reward system. Results of this study reveal that this explanation is insufficient as well. Most of the participants in this study attained little external reward for public scholarship other than small grants to enhance their work with the community. Further, almost all the participants said that pretenure faculty should not get involved in public scholarship or knew of colleagues who had advised others to secure tenure before engaging in public scholarship. Nevertheless, eight of the ten tenure-line participants began their public scholarship while they were still tenure-seeking assistant professors.

---

*“Participants with this pattern also talked of how institutional support for public scholarship intensified their commitment to the university as well as to their academic work.”*

---

In contrast, Ford's (1992) motivation systems theory recognizes that there are multiple, interrelated components of motivation. Goals, capability beliefs, context beliefs, and emotions must all be influenced to move individuals toward achievement. Moreover,

affecting one motivational component may affect other components in unexpected ways. The twelve faculty who participated in this study were selected because they were actively engaged in public scholarship at a research university where there was specific, targeted support for faculty engagement in public scholarship. Nevertheless, the complexity of motivational patterns was revealed in the similarities and differences across their individual backgrounds, experiences, self-perceptions, beliefs about their work contexts, and their emotions. Analysis of these faculty members' motivational patterns helps identify several levers for increasing faculty engagement in public scholarship.

The individual characteristic that emerged as most closely associated with integration and pervasiveness of public scholarship throughout one's academic work was professional identity.

---

*“[E]ncouraging faculty to see, explore, and exploit the connections between public scholarship and their other faculty responsibilities may become an important way to leverage more public scholarship engagement.”*

---

Participants who immediately identified themselves and their work as interdisciplinary, who perceived “synthetic” connections between their teaching, research, and service roles, and who had experience in academic and administrative positions also were more likely to discuss how public scholarship helped them integrate all aspects of their academic work. In contrast, participants who perceived teaching, research, and service as fragmented and competing roles were more likely to talk about public scholarship as an add-on to their required

academic work. In this admittedly small sample, demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and discipline did not affect public scholarship engagement. It is most striking, however, that both rank and tenure had little impact. Faculty from all ranks were represented in each major sector of the motivation maps from this analysis: robust, tenacious, modest or vulnerable, and antagonistic or discouraged. Thus, encouraging faculty to see, explore, and exploit the connections between public scholarship and their other faculty responsibilities may become an important way to leverage more public scholarship engagement. This could be achieved by asking faculty to highlight connections between their research, teaching, and public scholarship when preparing annual activity reports and dossiers for promotion and tenure (Colbeck 2002).

The number and variety of goals mentioned by participants was meaningful from the perspective of motivation systems theory. According to Ford (1992, 208), the “strongest motivational patterns are those anchored by multiple goals.” Most participants in this study easily volunteered multiple goals, which indicates some strength in their motivation. Additional strength was indicated by the personal importance of integrative social relationship goals. Participants whose goals for public scholarship further included cognitive, task, and self-assertive relationship goals were also faculty who discussed how public scholarship pervaded and integrated all aspects of their academic work. Another leverage point, then, for faculty and administrators who wish to encourage their colleagues to engage more completely in public scholarship is creating contexts that allow such goal alignment (Ford 1992). In fact, five of the participants volunteered their interest in preparing doctoral students as publicly engaged scholars.

Given the approach for selecting participants, it is not surprising that none discussed their strengths and weaknesses in a way that suggested they had weak capability beliefs for academic work in general or for public scholarship in particular. On the other hand, their comments revealed that capability beliefs of four of the twelve participants were moderate or variable. Feeling tentative, however, did not

keep them from engaging in public scholarship; two of the four indicated high levels of public scholarship integration and pervasiveness.

Similarly, the findings show that context matters, but faculty need not believe their university, department, or disciplinary contexts are perfectly supportive in order to engage in public scholarship. With some support, including leverage points such as targeted financial support for specific projects, formal policies for recognizing civic engagement and public scholarship as valued parts of the faculty portfolio, and a community of like-minded colleagues, these faculty endured many other discouraging aspects of their department, university, and disciplinary contexts. They were also willing to work for positive change for themselves and others. On the other hand, there may be a tipping point where too much negativity is likely to drive away dedicated, innovative faculty. In such an atmosphere, a faculty member with strong capability beliefs may

---

*“[C]ontext matters, but faculty need not believe their university, department, or disciplinary contexts are perfectly supportive in order to engage in public scholarship.”*

---

continue public scholarship engagement but look for another academic home that is more supportive of such efforts. Furthermore, institutional support for public scholarship has an added benefit for universities: it helps them retain active, engaged faculty. Three faculty said they had intensified their commitment to the institution and ignored offers from other universities because of the support for public scholarship they perceived at Penn State.

Active, communal support for faculty engaged in public scholarship may depend upon leverage points more sophisticated than simple incentives. Ford (1992) notes that some incentive programs may be too specific, take autonomy away from faculty who might otherwise be interested in the topic, or generally be seen as too invasive. To motivate more engagement in public scholarship, departmental and institutional leaders can also use facilitation of conversations among faculty interested in public scholarship as a leverage point. They could provide support for increased levels of public scholarship by facilitating conversations among faculty that allow for goal generation and ownership. The Public Scholarship Associates (PSA) program at Penn State is a dynamic example of how an institution can foster faculty ownership and dialogue about public scholarship while providing seed money to start public scholarship projects. As in the PSA example, there are ample opportunities for departmental leaders to provide feedback, both constructive and laudatory, to faculty. Constructive feedback “can help facilitate realistic goal setting, trigger adaptive emotional responses, and provide a solid basis for constructing and modifying” capability beliefs and context beliefs (Ford 1992, 210). Such efforts will help set an agenda of public scholarship for an institution and help faculty work together on long-term goals for public scholarship.

Faculty who engage in public scholarship, such as those who participated in this study, share values integral to the academic enterprise, including democracy, sharing power, facilitating communication, and encouraging voice for those often unheard. When public scholarship integrates and pervades their academic work, public scholars tend to find ways to actively incorporate these values in their teaching, research, and administration or roles in governance, to the overall benefit of their students, departments, disciplines, and universities. Public scholarship connects the institution and its students to the surrounding community while producing valuable student learning outcomes and fostering greater connections between what happens within the university and the surrounding community.

## Endnote

1. Interview transcripts are on file with Carol L. Colbeck, University of Massachusetts Boston.

## References

- Bandura, A. 1977. Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review* 84 (2): 191–215.
- Bess, J. L. 1977. The motivation to teach. *Journal of Higher Education* 48 (3): 243–58.
- Boyte, H. C. 2004. *Going public: Academics and public life*. Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.
- Burke, P. J. 2003. Introd. to *Advances in identity theory and research*, ed. Peter J. Burke, T. J. Owens, R. T. Serpe, and Peggy A. Thoits. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Checkoway, B. 2001. Renewing the civic mission of the American research university. *Journal of Higher Education* 72 (2): 125–47.
- Cohen, J., and L. Yapa. 2003. Introd. to *A blueprint for public scholarship at Penn State*, ed. Jeremy Cohen and Lucksmann Yapa. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University.
- Colbeck, C. L. 2002. Integration: Evaluating faculty work as a whole. In *Evaluating faculty performance*, ed. Carol L. Colbeck, 43–52. New Directions for Institutional Research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Colbeck, C. L. 2008. Professional identity development theory and doctoral education. In *Educating integrated professionals: Theory and practice on preparation for the professoriate*, ed. Carol L. Colbeck, KerryAnn O'Meara, and Ann E. Austin, 7–16. New Directions for Teaching and Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Colbeck, C. L., and P. W. Michael. 2006a. Individual and organizational influences on faculty members' engagement in public scholarship. In *Laboratory for public scholarship and democracy*, ed. Rosa A. Eberly and Jeremy Cohen, 17–26. New Directions for Teaching and Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Colbeck, C. L., and P. W. Michael. 2006b. The public scholarship: Reintegrating Boyer's four domains. In *Analyzing faculty work and rewards: Using Boyer's four domains of scholarship*, ed. John M. Braxton, 7–20. New Directions for Institutional Research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Dyer, L., and D. F. Parker. 1975. Classifying outcomes in work motivation research: An examination of the intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomy. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 60 (4): 455–58.
- Ford, M. E. 1992. *Motivating humans: Goals, emotions, and personal agency beliefs*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities. 2000. *Renewing the covenant: Learning, discovery, and engagement in a new age and a different world*. [http://www.nasulgc.org/publications/Kellogg/Kellogg2000\\_covenant.pdf](http://www.nasulgc.org/publications/Kellogg/Kellogg2000_covenant.pdf).
- Maehr, J. L., and L. Braskamp. 1986. *The motivation factor: A theory of personal investment*. Lexington, MA: Lexington.

- McKeachie, W. J. 1982. The rewards of teaching. In *Motivating professors to teach effectively*, ed. William McKeachie, 7–14. New Directions for Teaching and Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mowday, R. T. 1982. Expectancy theory approaches to faculty motivation. In *Motivating professors to teach effectively*, ed. William McKeachie, 59–70. New Directions for Teaching and Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- O'Meara, K. 2002. Uncovering the values in faculty evaluation of service as scholarship. *Journal of Higher Education* 26 (1): 57–80.
- O'Meara, K. 2005. Effects of encouraging multiple forms of scholarship nationwide and across institutional types. In *Faculty priorities reconsidered: Rewarding multiple forms of scholarship*, ed. KerryAnn O'Meara and R. Eugene Rice, 255–89. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- O'Meara, K., and R. E. Rice, eds. 2005. *Faculty priorities reconsidered: Rewarding multiple forms of scholarship*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Slocum, J. W. 1971. Motivation in managerial levels: Relationship of need satisfaction to job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 55: 312–16.
- Ward, K. 2003. *Faculty service roles and scholarship of engagement*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, vol. 29, no. 5. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Yapa, L. 2006. Public scholarship in the postmodern university. In *Laboratory for public scholarship and democracy*, ed. Rosa A. Eberly and Jeremy Cohen, 73–83. New Directions for Teaching and Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

## About the Authors

- Carol L. Colbeck is dean of the Graduate College of Education and professor of higher education at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She was formerly director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education and a public scholar associate at the Pennsylvania State University.
- Lisa D. Weaver is assistant professor in the Department of Academic Development and Counseling at Lock Haven University in Pennsylvania. She is director of the Haven Achievers program, which provides a comprehensive academic support program to assist selected students in becoming successful in a higher education setting.