You-niversity?

Perceptions on the Public Effectiveness of University Knowledge Production

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Abstract

Initiatives, such as Open Access, citizen science, and publicly-engaged scholarship, are changing the nature of academic life, pushing university faculty to reconsider their relationship to the community(ies) within which they live and work. But in the conversation about public scholarship, who represents the voice of the public? Are those outside of the university satisfied with how higher education institutions engage their communities? Do they feel they can access and contribute to the knowledge produced at universities? And how do their expectations about university-community collaboration align with those of faculty members? We explore these questions and others through two surveys—one directed at faculty, one at members of the public—to better understand how these distinct groups view the changing role of the university in public life. We find evidence that members of both university faculty and the public support the idea of university-community collaboration in theory—with both groups acknowledging numerous potential benefits for society and for academia—but struggle when putting it into practice. We conclude by discussing some of the potential barriers that prevent successful community-university engagement.

1. "To Whom Are Higher Education Organizations Accountable?"[1]

Are universities accountable to their students? To their communities? To their governments? To humankind? Who represents the public's interests when it comes to evaluating these so-called public institutions?

We found ourselves asking these questions when participating in a course called "Making Knowledge Public" at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Vancouver, Canada.[2] During the course, we discussed the challenges and opportunities of connecting universities with their communities, touching on everything from citizen science and Open Access publishing to Indigenous research collaboration and public policy.

Although our readings and lectures gave us a strong understanding of the benefits, hurdles, and strategies involved in publicly engaged scholarship, a crucial piece seemed to be missing from the picture: How does *the public* feel about the role of universities in society? In the conversation around public scholarship, we felt we were hearing only scholars' voices and none of the public's. In an attempt to remedy this imbalance, we reached out to members of our community to ask them about their perceptions of university knowledge production.

The results of this exploratory exercise suggest strong support from both within and outside of the university in favor of public scholarship: members of both the faculty and the public acknowledge the potential benefits of community-university collaboration for society. But our results also reveal a significant gap between dream and reality. Numerous members of the public report a sense of exclusion from university life. Meanwhile, several faculty members express uncertainty about how best to put their ideas about community engagement into practice or struggle to balance their ideals with the demands of their academic careers.

2. Reaching Out

With the aim of understanding individuals' perspectives in their own words, we reached out to members of our community using open-ended surveys.[3] We created two simple surveys—one for members of the public, one

1. Juan Pablo Alperin et al., "How significant are the public dimensions of faculty work in review, promotion, and tenure documents?" *Humanities Commons* (preprint), http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6W950N35.
2. Juan Pablo Alperin, "Course: Making Knowledge Public," *ScholCommLab*, Nov. 14, 2018, https://www.scholcommlab.ca/publicknowledgecourse/.
3. Detailed questions and responses from our surveys are available here: https://bit.ly/2GJtReW.

for faculty members—to capture how these distinct groups think about the university and its role in the community. In the first survey, we asked members of the public—which, for the purpose of the survey, we defined as anyone who did not identify as university faculty member—to assess whether they felt universities should be accountable to them in any form and whether they felt capable of contributing to the university themselves. These were questions about how "you" as an individual relate to "the university" as an institution. In the second survey, we asked university faculty members about the importance of their work for the public and how they saw their relationship to the community.

The two surveys were available online for two weeks and participation was completely voluntary. We recruited respondents through social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and email. In order to reach people outside of our personal online communities, we also posted the surveys in public Facebook groups and asked our friends, family, and colleagues to share them with others.

Over just five days, we collected seventy-nine responses to our survey from members of the public, far exceeding our initial expectations. When it came to faculty members, however, we were surprised to find that we had collected only seven responses after five days. To gather a more substantial set of responses for our faculty-oriented survey, we introduced a more active recruitment strategy. We collected an additional ten responses from faculty members in person by visiting offices and labs at SFU's Burnaby campus and providing interested faculty members with printed copies of the survey that could be filled out by hand.

Even with this more proactive recruitment strategy, collecting responses from faculty members proved to be a struggle. Several faculty members told us they simply didn't have time to complete the survey or that they would fill it out online at a later date. In two cases, we completed the survey on behalf of faculty members, reading each question aloud and then transcribing their verbal responses. These experiences, together with the challenges we faced gathering online responses, suggest that time was a major barrier for many. Still, we managed to gather a total of twenty-one responses from faculty members by the end of the two-week period—enough, we believe, to gain at least a sense of their perspectives.

To encourage participation, we decided to keep the survey as short as possible. Three open-ended questions about public scholarship comprised each survey, followed by an option to provide a name and email address with which we could share the final results. We felt it was important to include an option to respond anonymously, without any identifying information, so that people could answer freely and express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions in their own words.

For these reasons, we did not collect any demographic data, and we have limited knowledge of who, exactly, our respondents were. Because of our recruitment strategy, however, we can infer that a majority of respondents were connected to our personal social circles in some way (e.g., as friends, family, current or former colleagues, classmates, and professors) and were likely based primarily in North America (particularly in British Columbia, Canada, where we both live and work) or South America (where many members of Albrecht's social circle reside).

By taking a closer look at our survey data, we can also infer that many—but not all—of the public respondents were former university students or employees. Some were currently employed or enrolled at a university or college but did not identify as members of the faculty. While we cannot call our respondents "diverse" with any certainty, their responses suggest a breadth of interests, lifestyles, ages, and economic situations. For example, in their survey answers, our public respondents made references to being parents, having spouses or partners, working non-university jobs (e.g., consulting, primary school education, activism), being in their late twenties or identifying as older than fifty-five, having "more diverse background[s]" than participants typically included in university research, and more.

We know relatively little about respondents representing university faculty, but we can infer from their responses that they work in a range of departments, including publishing, education, atmospheric sciences, and chemistry, and

that they work for partially or completely publicly-funded universities. Almost all of these respondents referred to conducting some kind of research, suggesting that a majority of them were professors, assistant/associate professors, or deans/assistant deans, rather than instructors or sessional instructors.

Although the anonymous, open-ended nature of our surveys limits the kind of analyses we can perform and the conclusions we can draw, it allows us to explore individual views in a way that multiple choice responses simply could not have. For the most part, the free-form responses we received were rich, thoughtful, detailed, and, in some cases, highly emotional. The average response time for both surveys was double what we had initially expected (ten minutes as opposed to five minutes), and paragraph-length answers were common. Many of the people we reached out to found the experience so important or enjoyable that they volunteered to share the survey with others on our behalf. These factors, as well as the surprising ease with which we collected responses from the public, suggest that people took this exercise seriously.

The lack of demographic information we have available to us is undoubtedly a limitation of this research, as is the rather informal nature of our sampling method and survey instrument. However, these surveys produced a level and quality of responses that we believe merit careful study. The perspectives we share in the following section are thus by no means meant to be seen as representative of all people; rather, they draw attention to the importance of public scholarship in the eyes of both academics and the public—providing a starting point for a conversation that we hope will inspire future research.

3. Perceptions from the Public

3.1. People Feel They Have the Right to Access University Knowledge

Delving into the responses to our public survey, most people who responded felt they had a right to access the knowledge produced at universities. Why? Money was by far the most popular answer. In Canada, where the bulk of our survey respondents were located, universities are funded, in large part, by the public, either through taxes (about 50 percent of the total funding, as of 2018) or tuition payments (about 30 percent of the total funding).[4] Similarly, in the United States, where another large portion of respondents were located, state and federal government funding account for 37 percent of university budgets, while tuition fees cover 21 percent.[5]

The idea that, *if we pay for it, we own it,* came up in many of the responses—reflecting one common argument in favor of making all research Open Access (OA), or freely available to all. Although research is produced as a *public good*—that is, as something "non-excludable and non-rivalrous, supported by all for the benefit of all,"[6] as the OA advocacy group SPARC puts it on their website, "it isn't available to the public who paid for it."[7] Taxpayers themselves express this sentiment in their own words:

> First, because there is a lot of public money that has been invested in many universities. And second, what is the point of producing knowledge if it is not going to be shared with the general public?[8]

Respondents also raised several other reasons why university knowledge should be public. Many expressed a general feeling that knowledge is a basic human right and that society would benefit from more people having access to it. Again, the public's perspectives overlapped with those of OA advocates, like John Willinsky, who have argued that access to knowledge is a basic human right.[9]

4. Gerard Walsh, *The Cost of Credentials: The Shifting Burden of Post-Secondary Education in Canada* (Toronto: Royal Bank of Canada, 2018), http://www.rbc.com/economics/economic-reports/pdf/other-reports/Tuition_June2018.pdf.

5. Ingrid Schroeder and Anne Stauffer, "Federal and State Funding of Higher Education: A Changing Landscape," *The Pew Charitable Trusts*, Jun. 11 2015, https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2015/06/federal-and-state-funding-of-higher-education.

6. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Generous Thinking: The University and the Public Good* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP 2018), 23, https://generousthinking.hcommons.org/5-the-university/public-and-private-goods/.

7. "Open Access," SPARC, accessed November 2018, https://sparcopen.org/open-access/.

8. Renato Pereira, survey response, November, 2018.

9. John Willinsky, *The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access to Research and Scholarship* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), http://hdl.handle.net/10150/106529.

> Knowledge should not be reserved for the academic elite, this is knowledge that is best used to help the populations putting those theories into practice, or being affected by the phenomena/histories that are being explored and addressed at universities.[10]

> ... one purpose of universities is for the betterment of society and if that knowledge/research was only to remain on the campus, that objective would not be met.[11]

Knowing that people still view knowledge as a public good is comforting, particularly in the face of recent cuts to government research funding, especially in Canada[12] and the United States.[13] Indeed, in a system facing increasing pressure to privatize every aspect of the commons, it's a small wonder that the concept of a public good continues to exist at all.

Finally, many respondents viewed access to university knowledge as a matter of transparency and a way of guaranteeing democratic values. In an era obsessed with "fake news," respondents viewed having access to evidence produced by knowledgeable people as an important tool for fact-checking:

> Keeping important knowledge in the hands of an elite is not only unfair but dangerous, as this prevents the public from verifying statements made by politicians, governments, the media, or groups or individuals intent on disseminating falsehoods in order to further their own agendas.[14]

3.2. Universities Are an Important Part of Daily Life

The vast majority of the people we surveyed felt that universities influence them directly in some way. The form of that influence varied from person to person, but the economic impact of higher education emerged as a common theme. For example, many people saw universities as providing important personal benefits, including opportunities for networking, career growth, and immigration, as well as drawbacks, such as student debt. On a societal level, people noted that higher education can help generate new jobs and industry breakthroughs:

> They bring a youthful energy to a community in so many ways and act as important cultural hubs through the immigration opportunities they offer.[15]

People also felt that universities play an important intellectual role in society. Many saw these institutions as "intellectual benchmarks" for the community, essential to shaping public opinion and public policy, and producing *public intellectuals*—knowledgeable citizens who can bridge the gap between experts and the greater community.[16] Several individuals reported that universities encourage critical thinking and personal development through public lectures, forums, and workshops:

> Universities continue to impact my life as structures that I look to as a model of progress within our community .... I consider universities to be the intellectual benchmark to which the rest of our community should measure itself.[17]

On a more practical level, many people felt that there were immediate community benefits of universities, such as having access to gyms, libraries, and other public facilities. Activist partnerships between students and outside organizations were seen as another way in which universities and their communities could directly engage each other.

But not everyone felt the presence of the university in their lives. Some respondents hardly seemed impacted by these institutions in any way, and several mentioned they felt far re-

10. Anaheed Saatchi, survey response, November, 2018
11. Anonymous survey response, November, 2018
12. Nicola Jones, "Canada Budget Falls Flat with Scientists," *Nature,* Mar. 23, 2017, https://www.nature.com/news/canada-budget-falls-flat-with-scientists-1.21699.
13. Jeffrey Mervis, "Data Check: U.S. Government Share of Basic Research Funding Falls below 50%," *Science*, Mar. 9, 2017, https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/03/data-check-us-government-share-basic-research-funding-falls-below-50.
14. Kris Fleerackers, survey response, November, 2018
15. Anonymous survey response, November, 2018
16. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Generous Thinking: The University and the Public Good* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 20, https://generousthinking.hcommons.org/4-working-in-public/public-intellectuals/.
17. Sarah Corsie, survey response, November, 2018

moved now that they were no longer students themselves:

> Now that I am out of school for years, I honestly don't hear anything from Universities at all (*sic*). My area is White Rock and here we rarely see university students and their projects/community services.[18]

> Not anymore. After graduating, I feel very removed from the academic world.[19]

3.3. Citizens Can Contribute to University Research

Most of our public survey respondents felt they could contribute to academic research in some way. Participating in studies as a subject or data source was one of the most commonly mentioned forms that this contribution could take. But people also noted several other ways of getting involved, including volunteering as a researcher or collaborator; building research partnerships between community organizations and academics; and providing feedback, new knowledge, or different perspectives by sharing their lived experiences with researchers:

> [I could contribute] by adding important knowledge and insights from lived, practical experience, and also speaking to certain assumptions or interpretations that may not match such lived experience or what is observed beyond the academy.[20]

Yet, despite a general feeling that it would be possible to contribute to university research, many respondents were unsure how to do so. In some cases, poor marketing was seen as a barrier to participation. For example, several people felt unclear about where to find research opportunities and noted that calls for participants seldom make it beyond university walls and into the community. Others expressed a general sense of exclusion from the university and felt that "if you want to contribute at a university either enroll or get a job there":

> I would like to [participate] as a citizen, but the barriers to entry are often prohibitive. Unless researchers go out of their way to market to those outside the university, the path to contributing to research done at universities is unclear at best and discouraged or disallowed at worst.[21]

> I feel like my contributions are limited. I think my capacity for involvement depends on the university's capacity for letting me.[22]

4. Perceptions from Academics

4.1. Academics' Sense of Public Responsibility Mirrors Traditional Roles

When it came to the professors, most people we spoke with saw their responsibility to the public as falling into one of three main categories: research, education, or civic engagement. Although the way individual professors thought about their responsibilities varied, it was interesting to see how closely these broad categories mapped onto the traditional academic trifecta of research, teaching, and service—the three categories outlined in the review, promotion, and tenure guidelines with which faculty performance is assessed.[23]

Previous research has explored the self-fulfilling nature of assessment criteria in academic culture, noting how the metrics and indicators used to evaluate research outputs can change scholars' research behaviors[24] and ideas about what counts as academic impact.[25] Too often, such assessment criteria take on a role they were never meant to play: defining the kinds

18. Carla Oliveira, survey response, November, 2018
19. Anonymous survey response, November, 2018
20. Anonymous survey response, November, 2018
21. Erik Hanson, survey response, November, 2018
22. Michelle La, survey response, November, 2018
23. Alice Fleerackers, "Preliminary Findings from the Review, Promotion, and Tenure Study," *ScholCommLab* (blog), May 30, 2018, https://www.scholcommlab.ca/2018/05/30/preliminary-findings-from-the-review-promotion-and-tenure-study/.
24. Stefanie Haustein and Vincent Lariviere, "The Use of Bibliometrics for Assessing Research: Possibilities, Limitations and Adverse effects," in *Incentives and Performance,* eds. Isabell M. Welpe, Jutta Wollersheim, Stefanie Ringelhan, and Margit Osterloh (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-09785-5_8.
25. James Wilsdon et al., *The Metric Tide: Report of the Independent Review of the Role of Metrics in Research Assessment and Management* (2015), https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.4929.1363.

of academic outputs and impacts that scholars strive for, rather than simply assessing what scholars actually produce. Although we cannot be certain whether the same is true of review, promotion, and tenure criteria, the nature of the reflections we received from faculty members about their responsibility to the public certainly seems to suggest so.

Research-related responsibilities came to the fore in a large portion of the responses, with many professors emphasizing the importance of ethics and societal impacts in their work. For example, Dr. Jean McLean, a lecturer in SFU's education department, felt she had a responsibility "To be engaged with issues that matter to the local and global community [and] to do research that impacts actual people." Others mentioned ideals such as "ensuring that all my work is in the public interest" or "contribut[ing] to *useful* scholarship" (emphasis added). This emphasis on research, rather than teaching or civic engagement, in faculty members' responses seemed to align with the high value placed on research in the review, promotion, and tenure criteria at many universities.[26]

When it came to teaching, we noted that many of the responses were student-focused, rather than public-focused. That is, a large portion of the professors we spoke with seemed to prioritize their responsibility to their students over any teaching outside of the university:

> As in, not to my students, but to the public at large? I think of my responsibilities as being to my students, to provide the tools, experiences, [and] histories they've enrolled to gain.[27]

A few respondents did mention teaching within the greater community but often only as a secondary responsibility (after traditional teaching). In some of these cases, faculty members felt they had a duty to translate their findings so that they could be understood by lay audiences—to "transform … knowledge in accessible words to the general public." In other cases, faculty referred to public education in only a vague, lofty sense. For example, they used phrases such as "sharing research to a variety of audiences," "transfer[ring] knowledge," "knowledge mobilization," or "[providing] information and interpretation to the public (on a casual scale)." Public education seemed to be important to some faculty members on at least a theoretical level, but few mentioned any clear examples of what that engagement looked like or how they had incorporated it in their daily lives.

The third category, civic engagement, seemed to be the least clearly defined of all. Faculty members felt that they had a duty to the greater community, but they had difficulty expressing what that duty looked like in concrete terms. Responses included phrases like engaging in "big picture thinking," "challenging the status quo," "creating culture," and "providing context." Again, as with public education, few (if any) responses mentioned direct examples of faculty-community partnerships or other collaborative initiatives. The abstract nature of these civic engagement-related responses is perhaps unsurprising, given that tenure guidelines in Canada and the United States tend to follow a similar pattern: specificity around the research and teaching dimensions of faculty life but vagueness around what "service" to the community involves.[28]

It was also interesting to note that, while many members of the public explicitly mentioned Open Access in their responses, relatively few faculty members did. At least one individual specifically referred to Open Access (as a "baseline" responsibility to make research accessible to the public); a few others mentioned it in a less direct fashion, noting, for example, that "access to academics … is a privilege" or that it is their responsibility, as academics, to "share" or "disseminate" their research to the public. But, overall, this issue did not appear to be front of mind for faculty members in the same way that it was for the public—suggesting a divide in opinions about Open Access and a possible disconnect between the public's needs and the university's priorities. Again, the vagueness with which Open Access is discussed in current

26. Juan Pablo Alperin et al., "How Significant Are the Public Dimensions of Faculty Work in Review, Promotion, and Tenure Documents?" *Humanities Commons* (preprint), https://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6W950N35.
27. Anonymous survey response, November, 2018
28. Juan Pablo Alperin et al., "How Significant Are the Public Dimensions of Faculty Work in Review, Promotion, and Tenure Documents?" *Humanities Commons* (preprint), https://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6W950N35.

faculty assessment criteria may, in part, be to blame.[29]

4.2. The Public Can Contribute to Research—But How?

Similar to what we heard from the public itself, a majority of professors felt that the public could contribute to their research in some way. But, just as with the public, what that contribution might look like varied widely.

Many professors saw volunteering for research studies as a primary way for the public to get involved in their work, mirroring what we heard from members of the public themselves. "I can't do research without the public's contributions," one professor told us, "They are the people who answer surveys, get interviewed, get observed, etc."

Others felt that the public could play an important role in shaping their research questions. For example, one faculty member said they used public meetings and public radio as inspiration for future projects. By understanding the concerns of the greater community, they felt they could identify key knowledge gaps and points of interest that could be investigated further.

Public participation through "citizen science"—in which the public contributes to forming research questions and methods, collecting or analyzing data, or interpreting results[30]—was another theme that emerged. For example, Dr. Vance Williams, an associate professor and associate chair in SFU's Department of Chemistry, saw "citizen science as an important, emerging area." He added, "there are no obvious ways to implement it for chemists," but he did feel it could have significant benefits within other disciplines by helping scientists interpret their results, decide on research questions, and keep the betterment of humanity in mind when conducting their work. This sentiment—that the public could contribute to some forms of research but that this participation was limited to specific fields or projects—came up in other responses as well:

> I'm not sure if I'd confidently say this is the case with ALL research, but my research—which addresses issues of cultural production, fan cultures, feminism, anti-racism, reading histories, etc.—is full of areas that non-academics often have expertise in and can contribute valuable perspectives to.[31]

Finally, a substantial portion of professors felt confident that the public *could* contribute to research but were unsure what that would look like. As one person put it, the question of how the public could participate in the research process was hard to answer "except in big hand-wavey ways." Another felt that "people might have [an] insight [or] perspective not yet explored" and that they "might become part of the research" but did not explain how. As with their reflections on civic engagement, faculty members expressed a high level of enthusiasm for the *possibility* of conducting research in collaboration with the public but cited few real-world examples of making that possibility a reality. They felt strongly that publicly engaged research could be beneficial, but they were uncertain about how to implement it.

Taken together, these responses suggest that, although there may be a strong desire for a more collaborative academic system, we are still lacking the institutional support needed to achieve it. Without real, tangible examples of what successful public collaboration looks like, or clearly defined incentives to explore the possibilities it provides, we fear only a minority of faculty members will ever attempt to take the leap.

4.3. The Public Are Non-Academics and Non-Experts

Finally, we wanted to understand who professors were referring to when they spoke of "the public." Were they thinking of students? Academics? Ordinary citizens? Or some other group entirely?

29. Juan Pablo Alperin et al., "How Significant Are the Public Dimensions of Faculty Work in Review, Promotion, and Tenure Documents?" *Humanities Commons* (preprint), https://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6W950N35.

30. Rick Bonney et al., "Can Citizen Science Enhance Public Understanding of Science?" *Public Understanding of Science*, 25 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662515607406.

31. Hannah McGregor, survey response, November, 2018

Consistent with previous research addressing this question,[32] a majority of the academics we spoke with viewed the public as an Other and, often, a non-scientific Other. That is, they saw the public comprised of people not affiliated with the university and not already familiar with their research. This envisioning of the public aligns well with the so-called *deficit model* of science communication, in which members of the public are seen as passive recipients of academic expertise, rather than active contributors or co-creators of knowledge.[33]

> Everyone outside the University excluding our colleagues from other Universities of the same research area.[34]

> People who are not affiliated with the university and who are not professionals in my industry (i.e. not students, chemists, etc).[35]

> Anyone who is not familiar with my research.[36]

When defining the public, several professors also mentioned specific demographic factors such as age, education level, geographic location, or language. For example, one person saw the public as "Anyone of reading age who isn't a specialist in my field," while another felt the public was comprised of "humans in anglophone countries."

A third subset of professors felt that the idea of a single public was flawed. For example, Dr. Hannah McGregor, an assistant professor in SFU's Publishing program, viewed the term public as "baggy" and preferred to think instead of "specific publics"—distinct groups of people with unique characteristics.

Finally, a fourth group of professors held a broad-sweeping view of the public, representing all people regardless of age, background, or expertise. Although no professor specifically stated so in their definition, this more inclusive view left open the possibility that academics could themselves be part of the public:

> [I see] the 'general public' [as] people who deserve to know what we do as scientists and to whom we can contribute by answering questions.[37]

> People in our communities: local, national, and global. The people we share this earth with.[38]

5. Our Conclusions

> Even with the best of intentions to engage, we often fail … to recognize and cultivate the voices of the diverse talent who are among the most valuable assets of our urban cores.[39]

As Open Education advocate and professor Robin DeRosa puts it, "a 'public good' is not easy to qualify; and hell, it's even harder to quantify."[40] Nothing could be truer when it comes to evaluating the role of universities in public life. The vast diversity of perspectives we collected from both faculty members and members of the public made it clear that there is no one simple way to define the "ideal" relationship between a university and its community(ies). Rather, the potential benefits of public scholarship and the forms it might take are wide-ranging and varied—capable of effecting change in many personal, societal, and global ways.

Although we are unable to identify a single, clear vision of what a university's public responsibilities should include—or a strategy for making that vision a reality—we can say with confidence that *this question matters*. The overwhelming number of thoughtful responses we received show that the public aspects

32. Molly J. Simis et al., "The Lure of Rationality: Why Does the Deficit Model Persist in Science Communication?" *Public Understanding of Science* 25, no. 4 (2016): 400-14, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0963662516629749.
33. Massimiano Bucchi, "Of Deficits, Deviations and Dialogues: Theories of Public Communication of Science," in *Handbook of Public Communication of Science and Technology,* ed Massimiano Bucchi and Brian Trench (New York: Routledge, 2008), 57-76, https://is.muni.cz/el/1431/jaro2017/Bi2800/um/Handbook-of-Public-Communication-of-Science-and-Technology.pdf.
34. José Guimarães, survey response, November 2018
35. Vance Williams, survey response, November, 2018
36. Haisheng Jiang, survey response, November, 2018
37. Pedro Dias, survey response, November, 2018
38. Jan Mclean, survey response, November, 2018
39. Nancy Cantor et al., "Making the Work of Anchor Institutions Stick: Building Coalitions and Collective Expertise", *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 17, no. 3 (2013): 17-44, https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/making_the_work_of_anchor_institutions_stick.pdf.
40. Robin DeRosa, "The Future of the Public Mission of Universities," *actualham: the professional hub for Robin DeRosa*, Nov. 22, 2018, http://robinderosa.net/higher-ed/publicfutures/.

of university knowledge production are very present in the public's mind. Almost everyone we asked recognized the presence of the university in their lives in some way and felt that they had a right to access and participate in the knowledge produced there. The same was true of professors, most of whom were enthusiastic about initiatives like citizen science and community partnerships, felt accountable to the public in some way, and were motivated to ensure their research was relevant, collaborative, and accessible. We hope these passionate responses inspire future research in this area, perhaps expanding on our exploratory results with larger and more diverse sample sizes, more systematic analyses, or further questions about what motivates individuals to collaborate across university walls.

At the same time, this exercise shows that we still have a long way to go when it comes to public scholarship. Many professors seemed to perceive the importance of their work as resting within the university: centred on imparting knowledge to their students and taking the lead in developing research questions, rather than engaging with the public as peers. Meanwhile, and perhaps as a result, a large portion of the public said they felt excluded from university life, noting that access to these institutions appeared to be reserved for students, faculty members, and other elites. Whatever the reason, the image of the "ivory tower" of academia seemed to persist in the minds of many,[41] casting a long shadow over the way they thought about public scholarship. Again, we hope future research will investigate this barrier to collaboration in greater detail. For, if this exercise has demonstrated anything, it's the importance of understanding why the public views universities as exclusionary and how that view might be changed.

Finally, although both the professors and the public expressed support for community-university collaboration and public access to knowledge, many were unsure of how to transform these lofty ideals into realities. This may, in part, be due to a lack of clearly defined criteria for identifying "public scholarship."[42] Many of the review, promotion, and tenure guidelines that administrators use to assess faculty performance offer only vague references to the importance of civic engagement but clearly define what is meant by research excellence. We saw a similar tendency reflected in many professors' survey responses: an emphasis on research-related responsibilities, with rather lofty, abstracted reflections related to public scholarship. Without formal guidelines, training, or incentives in place to facilitate community collaborations, diving into this unfamiliar domain may seem like a daunting task for many academics.

But the lack of implementation could also be a simple question of resources. Many of today's faculty members work upwards of sixty hours per week[43] and often do not have enough time in their hectic schedules to spend with their own families.[44] We saw the toll of these long hours while collecting responses for our survey—a task that proved surprisingly difficult. Although many of the academics we spoke with were warm and supportive, a large portion were either unavailable or simply too busy to help. If faculty members do not feel they have time to answer a ten-minute survey, how should they be expected to find the time to foster meaningful, lasting relationships with their communities? We return again to the importance of how different kinds of academic outputs are valued (or devalued) in faculty promotion considerations and how these assessment structures might influence decision making. As public scholar Hannah McGregor puts it, "People have finite energy, and if one thing is going to get you a job and the other is going to get you a thumbs up, but ultimately no financial security, what thing are you going to choose?"[45]

41. James Mulholland, "Academics: Forget about Public Engagement, Stay in Your Ivory Towers," *The Guardian*, Dec. 10, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2015/dec/10/academics-forget-about-public-engagement-stay-in-your-ivory-towers.

42. Juan Pablo Alperin et al., "How Significant Are the Public Dimensions of Faculty Work in Review, Promotion, and Tenure Documents?" *Humanities Commons* (preprint), https://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6W950N35.

43. Colleen Flaherty, "So Much to Do, So Little Time," *Inside Higher Ed*, Apr. 9, 2014, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/04/09/research-shows-professors-work-long-hours-and-spend-much-day-meetings.

44. Jerry A. Jacobs and Sarah E. Winslow, "Overworked Faculty: Job Stresses and Family Demands," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 596, no. 1 (2004): 104-29, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716204268185.

45. Alice Fleerackers, "Making Research Knowledge Public Award: Interview with Recipients Hannah McGregor

Despite these challenges, however, we remain positive about the future of public scholarship. There may still be a lot of work to do, but as long as publics and universities are prepared to tackle these challenges together—as our results suggest they are—progress feels not only possible but inevitable. As Kathleen Fitzpatrick so eloquently reflects in her book, *Generous Thinking*, "it is our mission, and our responsibility, to look beyond our own walls to the world beyond, to enlarge the gifts that we have received by passing them on to others."[46]

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You-niversity?

A Public Holistic Response

Anna Newman

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"You-niversity? Perceptions on the Public Effectiveness of University Knowledge Production" is an important contribution to our understanding of the perspective of the "public" in public scholarship. It points to areas for further discussion and exploration for universities and academics as they consider their roles in their communities and how they recognize and reward public knowledge production.

Alice Fleerackers and Carina Albrecht designed their study to allow the public to speak in their own words about their own experiences, which reveals a diversity of viewpoints and also, as the authors note, "that the public aspects of university knowledge production are very much present in the public's mind." The open-ended, informal nature of this research does have its limitations in terms of possible analyses. The authors are open about these limitations and their rationale for choosing this methodology, stating that the survey allowed them to gather rich, nuanced, often emotional responses from participants, which reflects the importance of the idea of public scholarship to members of the public and academics alike. As the authors write, their study is a "starting point" for an emerging conversation.

Of particular note is this article's contribution to research into assessment criteria and research impact in higher education, with regard to the promotion and tenure process. Fleerackers and Albrecht found that among their academic respondents, how they reported their responsibilities to the public reflected the traditional categories for faculty assessment—research, teaching, and service—with an emphasis on research, often more highly valued for promotion and tenure in university settings. They point to a need for further exploration of academics' responsibility for civic engagement and service to the community, as well as guidance and infrastructure that would encourage these activities in a more formalized way.

Fleerackers and Albrecht also observe a disconnect between opinions of the public and academics on open access to research. While members of the public saw knowledge as a public good--including knowledge produced at a university, often as a result of public funding--few faculty respondents recognized open access as a player in this conversation. Prior research has examined attitudes about open access among academics,[1] noting a number of reasons for a lack of participation in making their work openly available, such as a perceived lack of quality among open access journals. Yet, by bringing the opinions of the public into conversation with those of academics, Fleerackers and Albrecht engage with an idea at the heart of the open access movement: information privilege, or "the affordance or opportunity to access information that others cannot."[2] Further study might explore the responsibility of universities to dismantle information privilege by sharing their knowledge more openly and accessibly.

The authors' findings about public-university research collaborations also represent a rich area for further study and practice. That the public could make valuable contributions to university research activities is a clear conclusion from both surveys. The authors share the multiple possibilities for collaboration reported in their survey, but they note that there were few real-world applications. This may be an argument for integrating more public schol-

1. See, for example, Julia E. Rodriguez, "Awareness and Attitudes about Open Access Publishing: AS Glance at Generational Differences," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 40, no. 6 (2014): 604-10; Jennifer Rowley et al., "Academics' Behaviors and Attitudes towards Open Access Publishing in Scholarly Journals," *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 68, no. 5 (2017): 1201-11; Jingfeng Xia, "A Longitudinal Study of Scholars' Attitudes and Behaviors toward Open-Access Journal Publishing," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 61, no. 3 (2010): 615- 24.
2. Sarah Hare and Cara Evanson, "Information Privilege Outreach for Undergraduate Students," *College & Research Libraries* 79, no. 6 (2018): 726-36.

arship, citizen science, or community-based research into undergraduate and graduate education, to encourage collaborations that might extend past graduation, as students become university faculty or members of the public.

Fleerackers and Albrecht have conducted a nuanced and thought-provoking study with the potential to inspire further inclusive and accessible research into public views on university and community engagement. I look forward to seeing the next phase of the authors' research into this timely and important topic.

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