

## Leading Water Research Through Co-Production Discussion Notes

*Water@Michigan participants spent the closing session exploring how to move forward on co-production by discussing ways to identify partners, the barriers to co-production, individual workarounds to address the barriers, and ways the University of Michigan could better support co-production.*

Group: Tom Princen, Paul Webb, Mark Lindquist, Inger Schultz (partner working on Great Lakes library literacy)

### How to identify partners for co-production

- Depends on the project
- Identify stakeholders, see who wants to participate
- \*\*Serendipity – things bubble up
  - E.g., structured process/cold-calls/etc. didn't work; but an introduction at a party did work
  - Maybe that preparation makes you alert when the event/opportunity happens – this is where the networking is helpful (Graham could make those introductions; Sr. faculty should be do this for Jr. faculty – taking students to meetings, introducing them)
  - You can increase the odds of making it work
  - Networking is critical
    - Some acknowledgement that some people are not inclined to do this
- Concerns about who's included?
  - How to get to all the stakeholders, which stakeholders are represented
  - Need a tier of partners (e.g., can't connect directly to residents, but with contacts at community networks to make the connections)
- It's critically important to spend time in the community
  - E.g., spent time at coffee shops and bars – got a whole new view of what was going on (vs. what the mayors office thought)
- Additionally, \*\*problem definition resides with those experiencing the problem
  - can't presume to know what the problem is (you can go in with an idea, but can't be arrogant that you've got it right)
  - E.g., residents didn't care about flooding at the parks, instead they cared about being able to see the young men playing basketball
- Consultancy model—know the space, have the relationships, then people come to you looking for the solution

- The challenge is that people don't often pass on ideas that aren't aligned with their interests
  - UM expert webpage for media inquiries—could there be something like this for sustainability?
    - Graham has database, but how would people know to go to the Graham Institute page to find sustainability experts?
  - How much can the different institutions in Michigan collaborate? (acknowledgement that UM, MSU, MTU work together, but also compete)
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- **Barrier in co-production partnerships, and how you overcome them on an individual level?**
    - Time commitment – developing the relationship takes time
    - Low status /stigma – seen as “extension” work

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Additional notes:

- Support framework for faster responses to emerging/pressing issues
- Transactional/short-term vs. relational/long-term
- Strategic relationships; having an overall strategy that guides/aligns all the various projects, components

Group: Sanjiv Sinha, John Erb, Matt Child, John Bratton, Ravi Anupindi

**How do you identify partners for co-production?**

- Social Network
- Core characteristics/gap
- Value add for a specific opportunity
- Consumer/stakeholder that is impacted

**What are the barriers in co-production partnerships?**

- Value proposition for each stakeholder
- Investment of time in relationship building
- Assessing future potential vis-à-vis quality of engagement
- Comfort factor with existing partners

**How do overcome barriers on an individual level?**

- Clear expectations
- Good plan
- Institutional infrastructure
- Yelp App for “rate the co-production.com”

**What could the University of Michigan do to better support co-production and increase collaboration support opportunities?**

- Convening opportunities (forum/workshop, etc.)
- Seed money (for piloting)
- Lightning grants
- Go beyond research – to implementation

Group: Lara Treemore-Spears, Brad Garmon, Evan Pratt, Dick Norton, Daniel Phillips

**How do you identify partners for co-production?**

- Non-linear progression is typical (not necessarily planned up front)
- Be out-and-about to meet people – convened meetings like this are helpful
- Occasional targeted search for expertise (network to gain trust and introductions)
- Some partnerships require active cultivation (such as folks whose administration doesn't support it, to who tend to stay siloed... may need to offer incentives for their involvement like money, staff...)
- Identify voices that are missing from the conversation by asking if we really understand the problem and its potential solutions → seek others

**What are the barriers in co-production partnerships?**

- Bosses and bureaucracy
- Inevitable tension/friction from competing interests and needs
- Tenure process and academic disincentives – lack of metrics for partnership engagement
- Administrative disincentives for non-academic institutions
- Lack of funding
- Lack of time (partnerships take time; teaching demands are too great)
- Lack of trust (building relationships takes time)

**What could the University of Michigan do to better support co-production and increase collaboration support opportunities?**

- Streamline bureaucracy; develop policies to support co-production
- Modify administrative systems to make co-production easier
- Metric development and validation
- Symposia – demonstrate and celebrate collaborative successes; give supportive recognition and awards for good projects
- Give feedback and problem-solving ideas for how to improve collaborations
- Timely funding to stimulate co-production projects
- Modify administrative systems to make co-production easier (change tenure requirements, foster community relationship-building, provide metrics that value the building-blocks of co-production)

Group: Devin Gill, Bill Currie, Omar Gates, Mike Shriberg, Lynn Vaccaro

**How do you identify partners for co-production?**

- Use of boundary organizations to find partners ready to put in effort necessary to co-production
- Have an idea of how they might use products
- Open call for partnerships
- Use networks to identify potential partners (information and formal)
- Be strategic, optimize reach

**What are the barriers in co-production partnerships?**

- Developing trust – slow co-production/collaboration
- University bureaucracy – grant requirements
- Overcoming cultural differences, institutional differences – peer review culture can be abrasive/pessimistic
- Different goals – publication versus fixing a problem
- Different time scales – academia takes too long (benefits: cheaper students dedicated to task)

**How do overcome barriers on an individual level?**

[Blank]

**What could the University of Michigan do to better support co-production and increase collaboration support opportunities?**

- Support for academics to participate in community organizations
  - Incorporate into tenure considerations
- Incentivize – Co-design partnerships, more equitably

Group: [Not listed]

**How do you identify partners for co-production?**

- Draw on your own and colleagues' networks
- Wider call for community meetings
- Using social media like LinkedIn, Facebook...
- Informal networks – facilitations social contacts outside the University
- Informal settings
- Web searches of organizations, faculty profiles

**What are the barriers in co-production partnerships?**

- Engaging staff and students more effectively
- Time
- Reward structure
- Continued interest/participation
- Communication across specialties

**How do overcome barriers on an individual level?**

- Incentives
- Finding common purpose
- Balanced work load
- Finding common language
- Listening/respect/trust
- Setting clear expectations

**What could the University of Michigan do to better support co-production and increase collaboration support opportunities?**

- Highlight great examples of successful co-production
- Incentives
- Balanced work load
- Monitoring structure to inform new projects
- Help with networks

Group: Matt Doss, Kathryn Buckner, Gabe Ehrlich, Rolf Bouma, Emily Pfleiderer, Sharon Hu, Dana Thomas

**How do you identify partners for co-production?**

- Identify knowledge gaps
- Ask common partners
- Networking; in-person meetings
- Journal articles
- Publicize opportunities to partner
- Community-based organizations
- Professional associations
- Personal relationships/connections

**What are the barriers in co-production partnerships?**

- What the University evaluates faculty on – publishing vs. public service
- Lack of incentives to create partnerships
- Number of people involved in a collaboration and communications costs
- Time sensitivities for industry/private sector (need answer ASAP vs. semester)
- Applied solutions vs. theory

**How do overcome barriers on an individual level?**

- Communicating clearly with partners about what faculty need form partnership
- Transparency about how process works

**What could the University of Michigan do to better support co-production and increase collaboration support opportunities?**

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Group: Jen Read, Drew Horning, Michelle Swanson, Rob Pettit,

**How do you identify partners for co-production?**

- Tap network
- Michigan Expert Search Engine
- Granting agencies make connections
- Search conference in the area – speaker list
- Librarians

**What are the barriers in co-production partnerships?**

- University business model all about IDC-barrier
- Tension around what products should be University reward system anti-cross-disciplinary
- Allocation of time at University, no co-production/community engagement
- Timeline tensions; peer-review timeline and managing expectations
- Cultural gap/misalignment between co-production and how academics are trained/reward system
- Ignorance – networks are limited to our academic/professional networks

**How do overcome barriers on an individual level?**

- Identify ways to give communication updates in community (manage expectations) – clear protocol/schedule deliverables
- Clarify roles/responsibilities to shape process at outset
- Adapting design charrette model to other situations
- Partner with U-M Government Relations and outreach – education academics about these offices
- Using student projects to engage communities

**What could the University of Michigan do to better support co-production and increase collaboration support opportunities?**

- Expand access to and content for the Michigan Expert Database
- University needs to value applied/co-produced work at same level as other rewards
- Develop majors/interdisciplinary agree/certificate programs for people working on interface of science-community – “applied community engagement”