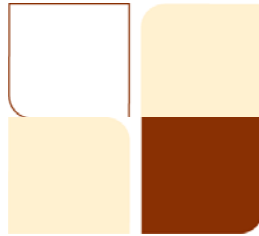




Role of Universities in Policy Research

Lessons and Opportunities in University-Government Partnerships

Presentation to the Mali-CSA Delegation
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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



New Economy Growth Strategies
Place Science



Renewable Energy Policy
New Institutional/Legal Structures



LAND POLICY INSTITUTE

Regional Placemaking Strategies
Land Use Planning & Policy
Attraction Policies
Mindset for Prosperity

- 3 Year Old “Brainbox” for Land, Place & Prosperity Science in Michigan.
- Integrated research & engagement.
- Science-based strategies for Michigan’s repositioning.
- From *reactive land use* to *proactive land policy*.
- New Economy Place Strategies.
- Our *partners and stakeholders*:
 - People, Places and their leaders.
- Our Infrastructure:
- LPR, FRD, MIHELP, REPP, PMT, ILP, New Path, CPP, PZC, PAL, CEC, LEP, LPEs.





Public Policy



- “Action taken collectively by society or its legitimate representatives, addressing problems that reflect the interests of society or particular segments of society” (Rogene Buchholz, 1992).
- Policies are needed to advance society.
- Bad policies can cost society a lot & result in social & economic problems.
- Policy-making should be forward-looking.
- Outcomes of political processes seldom under control of a group & should not be. If so for so long, conflicts & major institutional change arise.
- Policy change is slow, but out of whack policies may cause drastic change.
- Policy often requires compromises.
- At times of economic hardship, the policy process is highly stressed.
- But that is when knowledge and innovation, and forward looking, are most required.



Market System vs. Policy Process



■ Market decisions are usually well informed and policy decisions may also need to be.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Market System<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Exchange Process.○ Private goods/services.○ Economic value system.○ Self interest.○ Invisible hand.○ Economic roles.○ Consumer sovereignty.○ Profits as reward.○ Business as key institution.○ Operating principles is efficiency, productivity and growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Policy Process<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Political Process.○ Public goods/services.○ Diverse value system.○ Public interest.○ Visible hand.○ Political roles.○ Citizen sovereignty.○ Power as reward.○ Government as key institution.○ Operating principle is equity, power, justice, and fairness. |
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These two systems are foreign to academia, although we do not believe so.





Importance of the University in the Policy Process



- Public Policy issues are complex and controversial.
- They can involve the workings of markets, industry, legal system, state agencies, federal budget, social welfare, enforcement agencies, quality of life etc.
- Often, externalities are involved, but information does not exist.
- “Public interest” necessitates that diversity, intellect & science be part of the mix.
- Policy research requires rigorous analysis, systems thinking, judgment and wisdom.
- Resolution often involves public-private partnership.
- Need for unbiased third party and neutral convener.
- University can facilitate dialogue – often has expertise not available elsewhere.




University's Roles in Policy Research



- If universities are not close to the forefront, who will.
- But Universities have structural and values challenges that limit the ability to conduct policy research.
 - Problems of the world do not come in simple disciplinary packages.
 - Disciplines, faculty specialization and narrow focus of faculty.
 - “The literature does not support” most policy innovations.
 - Difficulty reconciling frontier basic research with applied work.
 - Wisdom more important than component excellence.
 - Often, policy arena needs balancing & broad stroke which academics abhor.
 - Lack of reward system.
 - Reluctance to be involved with new/emerging issues outside one's discipline.
 - Lack of effective means of fostering working relationships with policy makers.
 - Emphasis on program direction versus brushfire research.
 - Lack of support for entrepreneurial initiatives.
- Ability to build multi-disciplinary teams is important.
- Such teams effect more realistic research.





Structures of University Department that Limit Ability to Conduct Policy Research (continued)

- Limited project management or integrative resources.
- Not having all expertise in one shop.
- No measure of effectiveness of policy-oriented work.
- Policy makers do not understand academics (we've never really shown them what we can do).
- Turnover in state and local government officials (versus tenure).
- No formal mechanism for state officials to communicate their needs.
- Marketing of university capabilities lacking.
- Few one stop shopping facilities.
- Departments, Deans and higher ups struggle to see how policy work fits into the academic mission.
- Differences between university and government.
- Bringing universities and governments together is doing the impossible.
- University structure is different from government.



Differences between Universities and Governments

- **Universities are:**
 - Autonomous.
 - Accountability via peer review (objectivity).
 - Not always interested in practical real-world applications of our work.
 - Yet, need society to believe that what we do is important.
 - Do not market capabilities well.
 - Usually highlight what we do not do or do, not what we can.
 - Want enough lead-time to anticipate problems.
 - Respectful of science.
- **Governments:**
 - Want solutions to immediate problems.
 - Held accountable to the public, sometimes.
 - Need information to support their views (hired guns).
 - Don't usually understand how research works (quick fixes).
 - Prefer quick turn-around to research.
 - Respectful of knowledge.
- **In spite of the above, the need for collaboration is mounting.**





When is the university most needed?



- Times of crisis when quality choice is critical.
- When political solutions cannot work.
- When innovation is needed.
- When vision trumps lobbying.
- When new paradigm is needed.
- When new approach is less risky than traditional approaches.
- When the political system is failing and will not come back if it fails.
- When there is a large agency problem between people and their elected officials.
- In areas of economic development and growth paradigm.



Required Institutional Changes

Based on experiences as founder of the Agricultural Policy Research Center (APRC), Ecopolity Center (ECOPOL), Food Policy Institute (FPI) and Land Policy Institute (LPI)



- Flexibility and versatility desirable, so ad-hoc research teams more effective.
- Structure must survive dry times: temporary teams disbanded after completion of project.
- Structure cooperation is self-defeating.
- Fiscal restraints and adaptability (can't envision institute adequately staffed).
- Build on "star faculty" that has won the trust and commitment of government.
- Importance of coordinator and convener (project management).
- Development person is critical.
- Flexibility to bring in visitors, consultants and short-term staff.
- Encouragement of multi-disciplinary approaches and teams.
- Reward structure (recognizing policy contribution and public service).
- Reducing the administrative burden and transactions cost for faculty.
- Maintaining scholarly research productivity through effective project management.
- Databases increase productivity & liaison persons are critical.
- Empowered policy research leader

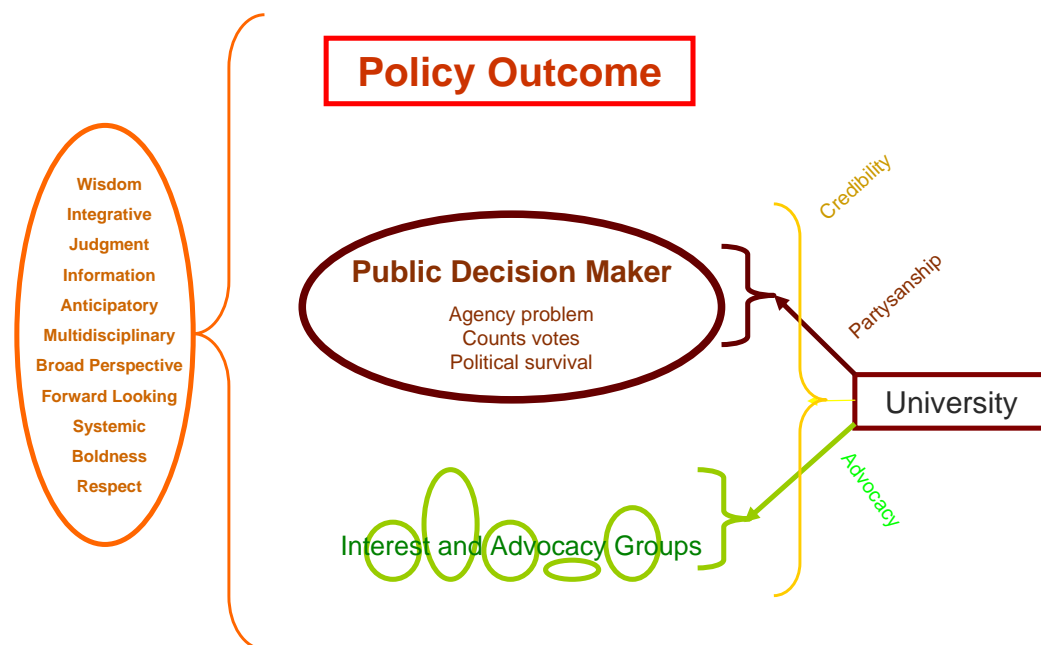


Required Institutional Changes (continued)

- Dialogue on long-term projects & needs with policy stakeholders.
- Discuss package of long-term issues and challenges.
- Identify long-term products based on wisdom of partners.
- Develop model of flexible implementation and delivery.
- Solicit funds from institutions focused on public trust.
- Emphasis on joint project design.
- Monitoring of policy product outcome.
- Managing policy development.
- Reports and documents.
- Sustaining the loop.
- E-Communication, a new delivery mechanism.

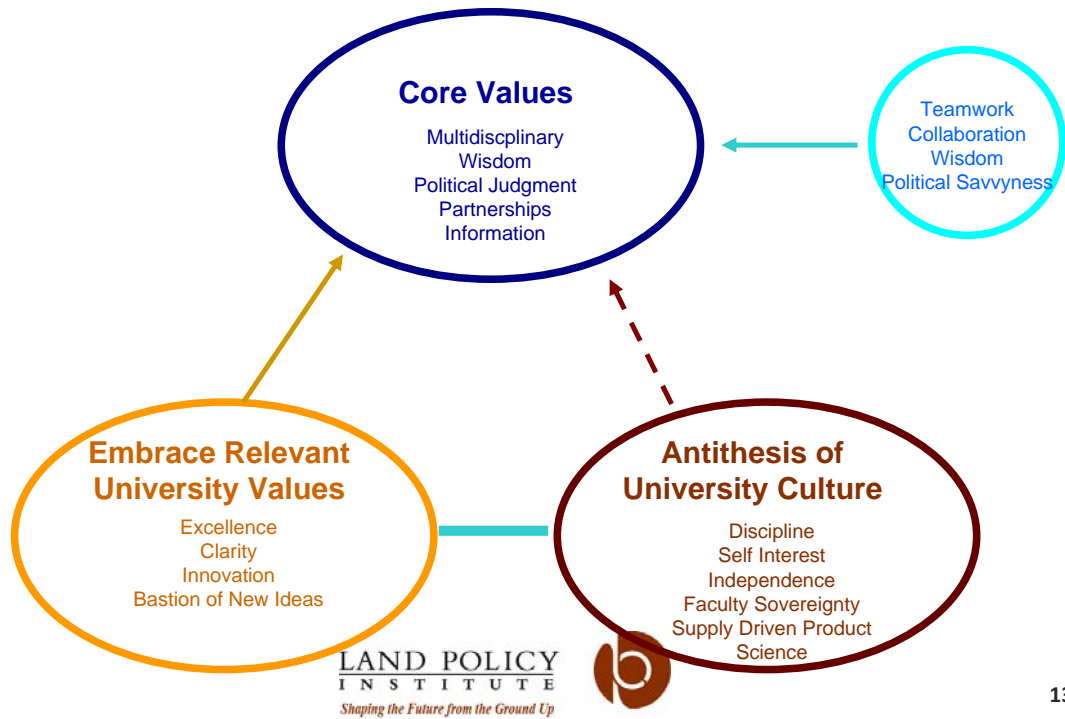


The Dilemma – Level of Engagement





Design Standards



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Examples of Collaboration in Land Policy



- Renewable Energy Policy in Michigan.
 - Studies.
 - Partnerships.
 - Outreach and public engagement.
- Regionalism in Michigan.
 - Research.
 - Outreach.
 - Policy design.
- Asset-Based Economic Development Plan for Nigeria-(ABED).
 - Purpose.
 - Research.
 - Policy Development.



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