

## Core Values *from Assessing the Practices of Public Scholarship*

An integrated approach to assessment of publicly engaged scholarship is guided by the following core values:

- **Collaboration**— An integrated approach to assessment engages community- and university-based stakeholders in defining what are meaningful outcomes and indicators of success, long before the assessment itself begins, and often in implementing the evaluation activity itself. It is grounded in a shared understanding of interrelated goals.
- **Reciprocity** – An integrated approach to assessment is useful to community- and university-based stakeholders. It goes back to the stakeholders involved; it invites reflection, feedback, and critique.
- **Generativity** – An integrated approach to assessment feeds the project, program, or course at hand. At the same time, it looks beyond the semester or project unit and invites stakeholders to evaluate the overall, long-term relationships at the heart of community-based education and public scholarship. It is part of an ongoing and dynamic process of programmatic, institutional, community, and/or regional development.
- **Rigor** – An integrated approach to assessment utilizes sound evaluation methodologies and practices.
- **Practicability**— An integrated approach to assessment promotes activities that are proportionate to the project and resources available.

Our preliminary research suggests that these core values coexist in dynamic and productive tensions with one another, and with the practical realities we inhabit. For instance, one group’s understanding of scholarly “rigor” and sound evaluation practice may well be challenged by other stakeholders in the process of collaborative and reciprocity-minded assessment. Or, we may find that assessment practices that live up to the highest collaborative ideal are not practicable at a given moment or scale.

Because of its core values and the dynamic relations between them, an integrated approach to assessment constitutes a process to engage in and with, rather than a model or tool to apply. It recognizes that stakeholders bring differing models, tools, and values to this assessment process, which must then fashion them to the particular agreed upon goals of the partnership.

In this and other ways, an integrated approach to assessment critically engages with the multiple institutional agendas and forces that are currently driving and pushing for assessment and allows collaborators to renegotiate their terms. These institutional mandates for assessment, often tied to funding and program continuation, may make high-stakes, short-



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from critical reflection and deeper understanding of the processes and/or strategies facilitating or impeding programmatic goals. The core values of an integrated approach to assessment form a flexible framework that both recognizes these realities and provides alternatives, countervalues, and guiding questions that can reframe assessment demands.

For this reason, an integrated approach to assessment emphasizes both the practicable and generative, the near-term goal and less-than-ideal process, as well as the long-term and aspirational. It opens the timeframe of impact assessment to look at the effects of sustained engagement that documents mistakes as well as successes and reflects upon them both collaboratively and rigorously.