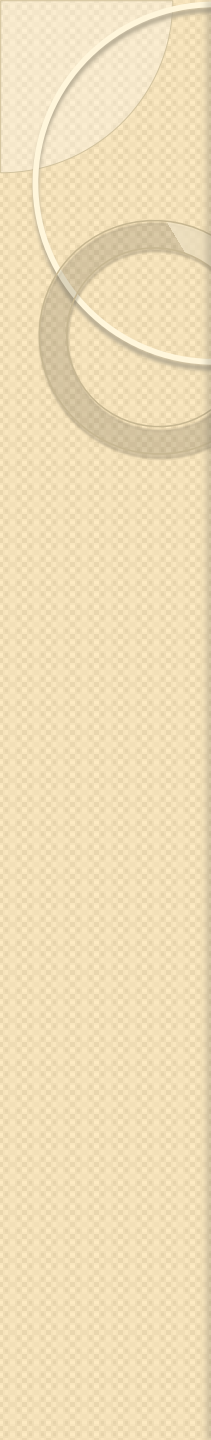# Universities and Engagement – an International Perspective

Presentation to Glasgow, A City of the Future: The EcCoWell Approach for 2020

5th December 2013

Dr Paul Benneworth, Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente, the Netherlands.

- "[T]he question of a university's society function in the very broadest sense of the term…includes not only the development of access to qualifications, but the production of knowledge and the social significance of that knowledge. It also involves a change in the sharing of responsibility for the development of knowledge and teaching…If the university is to be effectively integrated into the community, it must no longer concern only those who attend the university, namely the teachers and the students. It should be possible to pass on one's skills without being a teacher and to receive training without being a student" (CERI, 1982, p. 13).

Overview

- The perennial problem of university engagement
- A historical overview of university-community engagement
- An introduction to university-society collaboration
- An agenda for embedding engagement within university core missions

Acknowledgements

- Budd Hall & Rajesh Pandon (UNESCO Chairs)
- Cristina Escrigas, GUNI
- Paul Manners, NCCPE
- Economic & Social Research Council
- David, Paul, Lynne, Catherine, Cheryl (xNU)
- Mike Osborne

Part I

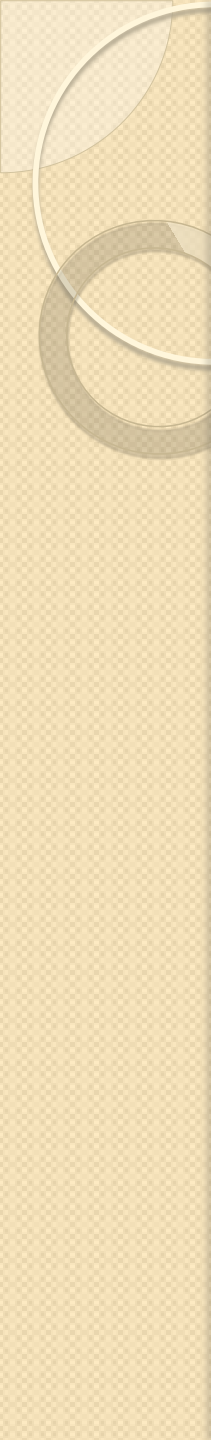# THE RECENT RISE OF THE UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT AGENDA

Tension of university engagement

- "Right from their medieval beginnings, [universities] have served private purposes and practical public purposes as well as the sheer *amor scientiae* ['knowledge for knowledge's sake']…popes and bishops needed educated pastors and they and kings needed educated administrators and lawyers capable of developing and embedding national systems" (Biggar, 2010, p. 77).

- "No modern university has ever lived entirely from the sale of its services. Universities have received subsidies from the church, the state, and private philanthropists as individuals and as foundations" (Shils, 1988, p. 210).

The rise of the engaged university

- "In universities around the world, something extraordinary is underway. Mobilising their human and intellectual resources, institutions of higher education are directly tacking community problems combating poverty, improving public health and restoring environmental quality. Brick by brick around the world, the engaged university is replacing the ivory tower''

(Backow, in Watson et al, 2010, p. xx)

- Universities with missions that emphasise community partnerships –the 'third mission' – and the value of civic responsibility would once have competed for a hearing. They are now finding their own voices, and being heard. There has emerged an impressive raft of publications documenting and analysing these efforts, declarations of commitment and intent … , some modest but important government funding programs and the material contributions of philanthropic foundations. All of these are helping to confer visibility and institutional legitimacy on university engagement.
- (Reid, 2013, p. 49)

But have we not been here before?

- Centre for Educational research and innovation (1982) The university and the community: the problems of changing relationships, Paris: OECD
- The fundamental problem in university engagement with the community is

  "how to combine commitment with neutrality, scientific objectivity with involvement in society problems and hence in social conflicts, and in the final analysis, independence with participation" (p.44).
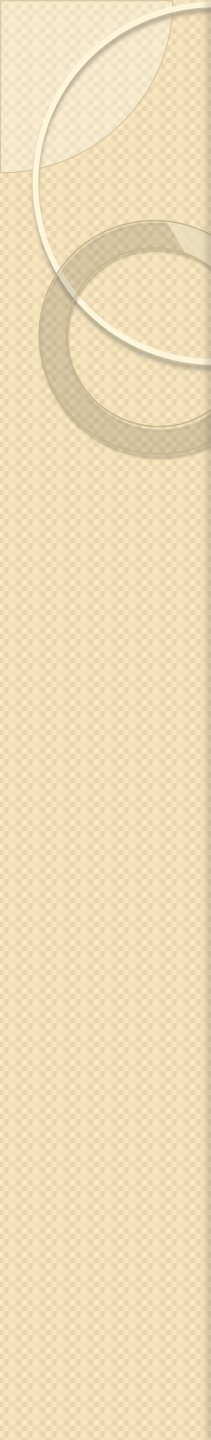
So why are we still talking about university engagement?

- If it is so obviously clear, why then don't we just do it?
- Why do CE professionals within unis feel peripheral and vulnerable?
- Why do we still organise conferences to celebrate UCE?
- Where did Adult Education go?

→ Discursive disconnect between talking and delivering effective engagement

Part II

UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

- "In my ideal society, the university will be the focal centre of the imaginative life of the region; it will profoundly "influence the way thinking and living move" (Flexner, 1930), not only by a perpetual process of irrigation through its graduates, but also as a centre of lively public interest. It ill provide largely, but not one may hope wholly, the thinkers of the region, the inspirers in committee and council, as well as in farm, factory and shipyard, the liberal-minded administrators." (Dobree, 1943, p. 6)

Universities have always kept sponsors happy…

Social change	Sponsor urgent desire	'Idea' of a university
Agricultural revolution	Reproducing religious administrators	Cloister (11th C Italy)
Emergence of nobility	Educating loyal administrators for courtly life	Free cloister (12th C France)
Urbanisation	Educated administrative elite to manage trade	Catholic University of Leuven (15th C)
Sustaining national communities	Validating the state by imagining the nation	Newman's idea (from 17thC onwards)
Creating technical elite	Creating a technical elite alongside the administrative elite	Humboldtian (19th C Germany)
Promoting Progress	Creating economically useful knowledge	Land Grant Universities (19th-20th C USA)
Supporting democracy	Creating elites for non-traditional societal groups	Dutch Catholic Unis (20th C NL)

…but also reflect their societies

- Emancipation and consociationalism
  - Universities as a prerequisite for social freedom
  - Public-isation of universities (Pittsburgh)
  - Politicisation of university managers
- Democratic mass university (Delanty, 2002)
  - Pressures of expansion in 1950s/ 1960s
  - 1968 – challenging bureaucratic order
  - Social mission for university – legitimacy

… in unpredictable ways

- Dutch Consociational Universities (1890-)
- Uni of Aveido (extension)
  - Latin American … Costa Rica, Argentina
- Toynbee Hall (Oxford University)
- Antigonish University (Nova Scotia)
- The Flemicisation of Louvain/ Leuven
- Sorbonne/ Maagdenhuis & May 68
- Occupy Birmingham, Sussex??

Part III

UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT AS A CORE VALUE-ADDED PROCESS

What does engagement involve?

Activity	Main areas of engagement activity
Research	Collaborative research projects
	Research projects involving co-creation
	Research commissioned by external groups
	Research on these groups then fed back
Knowledge exchange	Consultancy for external groups as a client
	Public funded knowledge exchange projects
	Capacity building between hard-to-reach groups
	Knowledge exchange through student 'consultancy'
	Promoting public understanding & media
Service	Making university assets & services accessible to external users
	Encouraging external groups to use assets
	Making an intellectual contribution as 'expert'
	Contributing to the civic life of the region
Teaching	Teaching appropriate engagement practices
	Practical education for citizenship
	Public lectures and seminar series
	CPD for non-traditional learning groups

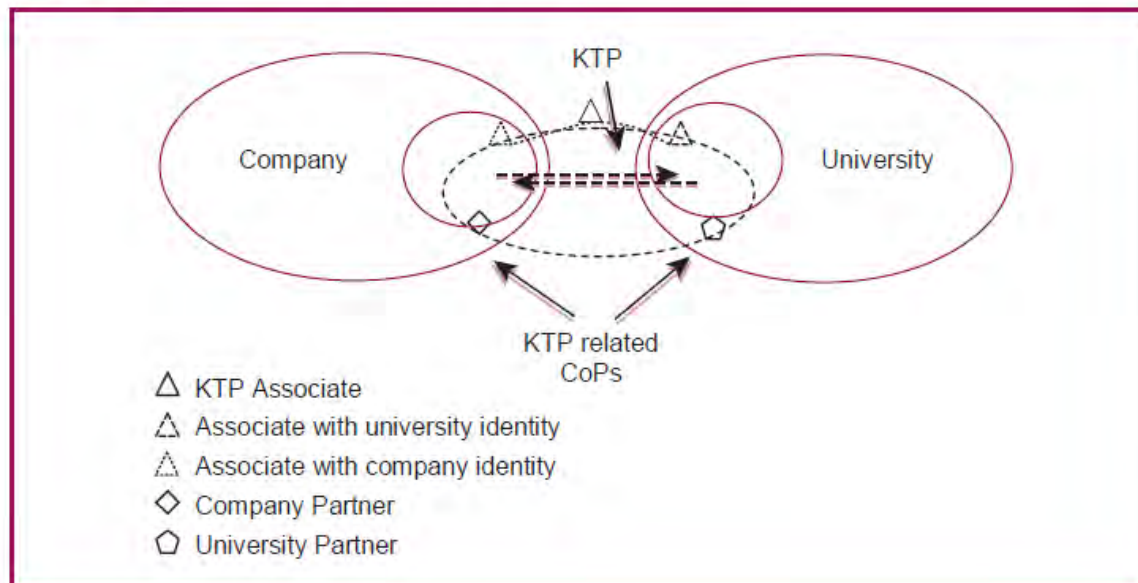# Linking what we do (collaboration) to what we are (collaborative university)
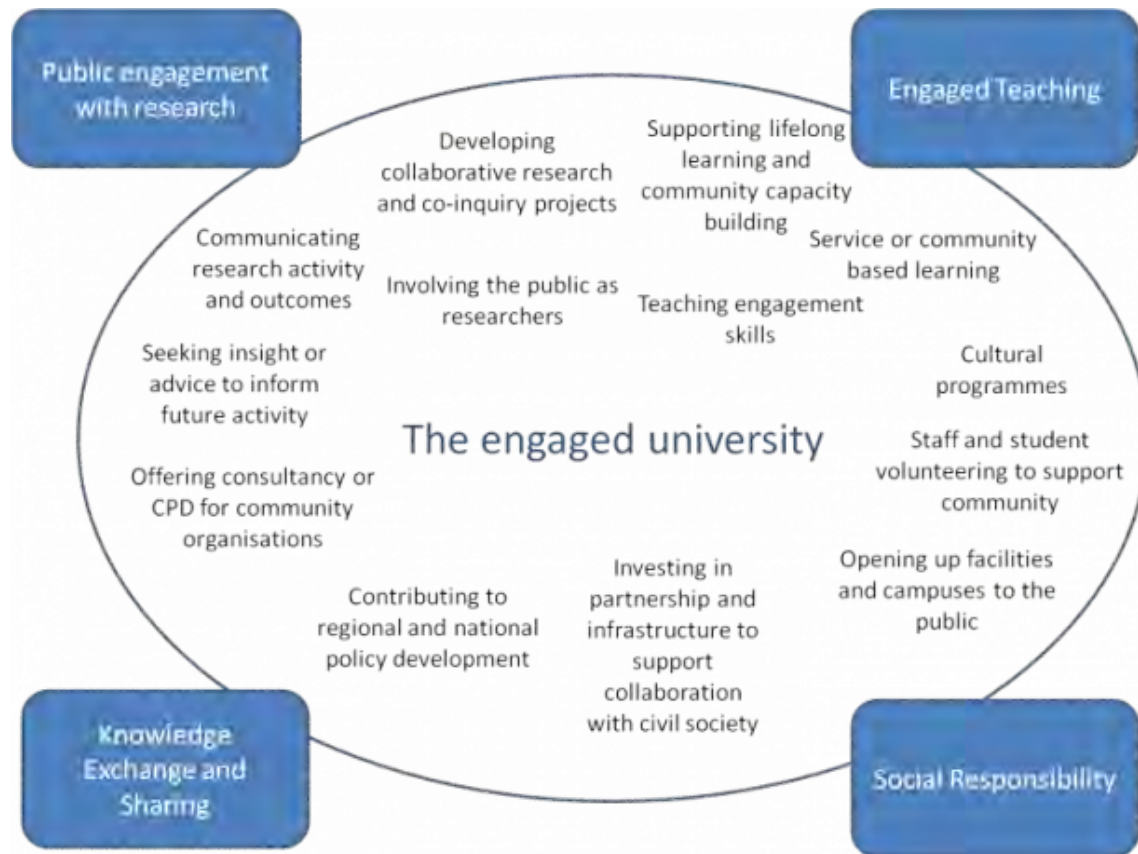
Source: NCCPE 2013.

Engagement as a core value-added process (CVAP)

- Engagement embedded within knowledge communities of mutual interest and benefit
  - Useful knowledge created for university <u>&</u> user

Figure 1 Communities of practice in KTPs

Source: Gertner et al., 2011

How do the community experience engagement?

Service Type	Mechanism for delivering service
University puts facilities at the disposal of the community	Use of equipment, premises, laboratories, laboratories
	Use of teachers and students to make direct contribution
	Drawing on the community in delivering occupational training
Execution of orders placed by community	Offering training as occupational, continuing education or cultural
	University receives a payment from community for delivery of a service
	A near private contract between the buyer and the vendor
Analysis of needs of community	The university comes into the community as an outside expert
	The university provides services for the community with some reference to an 'order' by the community
Analysing problems at community's request	University engages at community request in developing solutions
	University has the autonomy and freedom to suggest a range of solutions away from overarching pressure.
University delivers solution for community	The university delivers a service for the community which is compatible with its institutional status

Source: Benneworth (2013a) after CERI (1982)

How do universities organise engagement

- the entrepreneurial university (Clark, 1998),
- virtual university (Cornford & Pollock, 2003),
- the useful university (Goddard, 2005)
- the engaged university (Watson, 2007),
- the ethical university (Garlick, 2008),
- the authentic university (Barnett, 2011),
- the civic university (Goddard & Vallance, 2013)
- the entrepôt university (Benneworth, 2014).

The Civic University
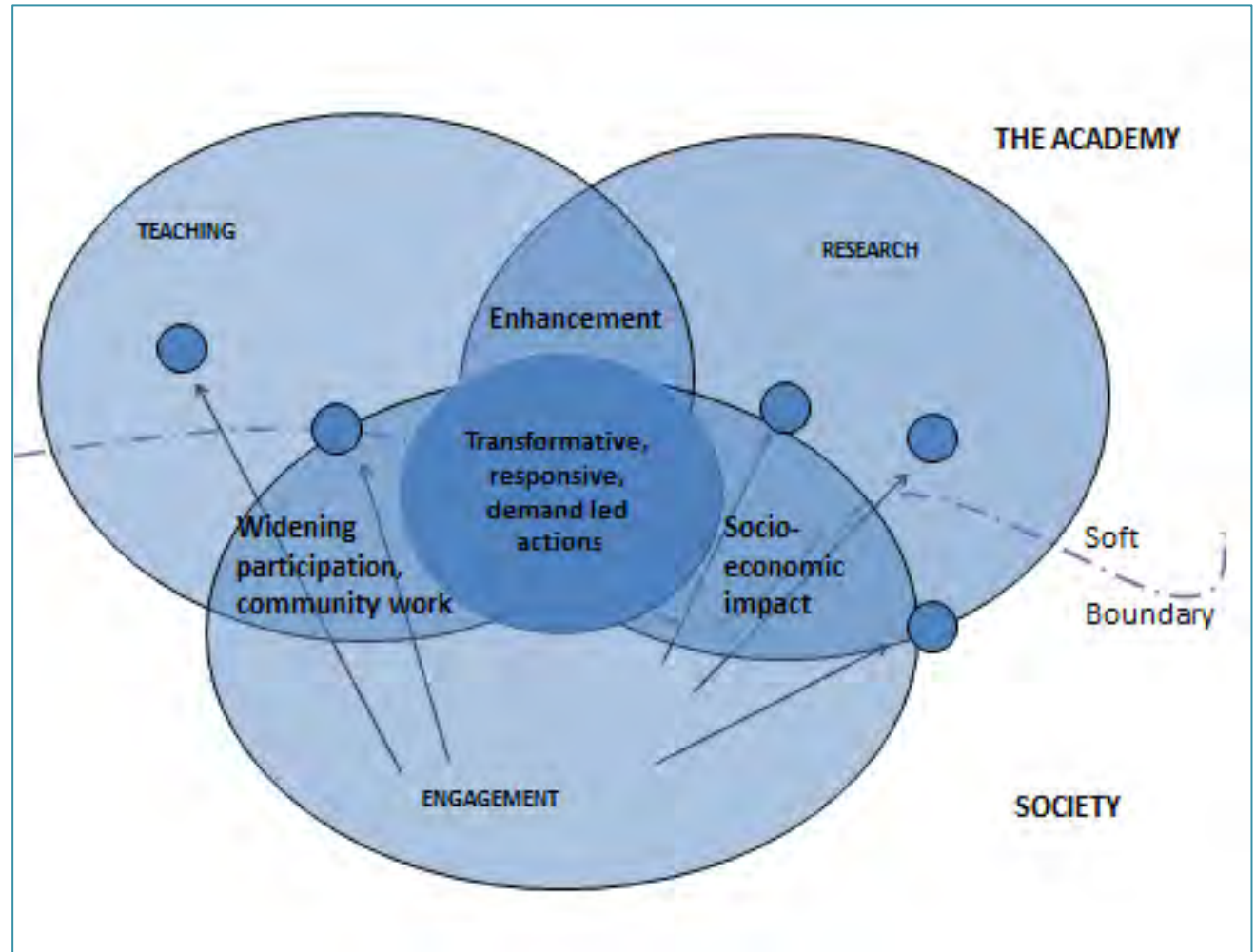
Goddard & Vallance, 2012

Part III

THE ELUSIVE CONCEPT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S SOCIETAL MISSION

Universities have always been useful…

"Advances in science when put to practical use mean more jobs, higher wages, shorter hours, more abundant crops, more leisure for recreation, for study, for learning how to live without the deadening drudgery which has been the burden of the common man for ages past. Advances in science will also bring higher standards of living, will lead to the prevention or cure of diseases, will promote conservation of our limited national resources, and will assure means of defense against aggression. But to achieve these objectives - to secure a high level of employment, to maintain a position of world leadership - the flow of new scientific knowledge must be both continuous and substantial." (Bush, 1945, ch. 1)

…universities are created to be useful …

- "Indeed, the increasing wealth, population and intelligence of the country must soon call into existence such establishments in various parts of the country, appears not only probable … but almost a necessary consequence of the encreasing (sic) demand for knowledge, and the total inadequacy of existing academic institutions to satisfy the demand" (p.7).

- "The probable failure of old channels of trade and the necessity of discovering new ones, which may not only supply their place, but afford encreased (sic) opportunity for disposing of the immense surplus produce of our several branches of manufacturing, and give employment to the rapidly accumulating capital of the country" (p. 8).

- Greenhow (1831) "The expediency of establishing an academic institution, of the nature of a college or university, for the promotion of literature and science, more especially amongst the middle classes of the community, briefly considered"

…but not always biddable

"We are a global player, and we work with the best partners, wherever they are to be found… We could be working with people, in other suburbs, cities, regions or countries… We just happen to be working with local partners."

(Composite of research interviews, 1999-date).

Profr Dumpty – PVC (Community Engagement)

'When *I* use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean -- neither more nor less.'

- Many rationales for engagement
- Engagement is potentially a tension for universities
- Universities do not wish to give others additional leverage over them
- Profr Dumpty does not admit a duty to engage
- Are universities part of the solution or the problem?

But universities are not 'naughty'

- Loosely coupled organisations of many knowledge creation/ transmission communities (Reponen, 1991)
- Informal institutions of 'Academic Tribes' – Becher & Trowler (2001)
- Formal structures overlapping but not capturing all informal institutions
- Rise of strategic management of universities – 'modernisation' agenda

The logics of university engagement.

- Different kinds of interactions have different societal dependencies
- Not simple division of teaching/ research/ other but highly specific
- Vary with HEI profile – broad vs narrow, research vs teaching intensive, urban vs rural core vs peripheral.
- Engagement 'mission' has to be inserted in these different logics.

The happy family story of the 'engaged university? '

- Engagement offers a very powerful and important moral discourse about the 'soul and values' of the university, which intersects with other significant current discourses in higher education – in particular those clustering around marketisation, accountability, innovation, impact and quality. Research assessment does now open the door to valuing external engagement, even if that valuation is still linked to research outputs. Is that a good or bad thing? How can such an opening create opportunities for engagement to move deeper into the mainstream of higher education practice? What are the risks? We need to take this challenge on more explicitly.

- (Manners, 2013, p. 68)

Part V

MOVING BEYOND TALK: TAKING UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT SERIOUSLY

# Beyond happy family stories of the 'engaged university'

Why are we still talking about engagement?

- Engagement always 'peripheral'
- Tensions with other activities
- Universities face other 'temptations'
- The engaged university has yet to be made?

→ Engagement is a <u>means</u> for the university, but an <u>end</u> for the community

Beyond a counsel of despair: insights from HEM literature

- Universities have many stakeholders
- University models balance relationships
- Other partners can force CE up agenda
- LT transformation of soft/ hard structures

Policy makers

Funders

Strategic partners

University
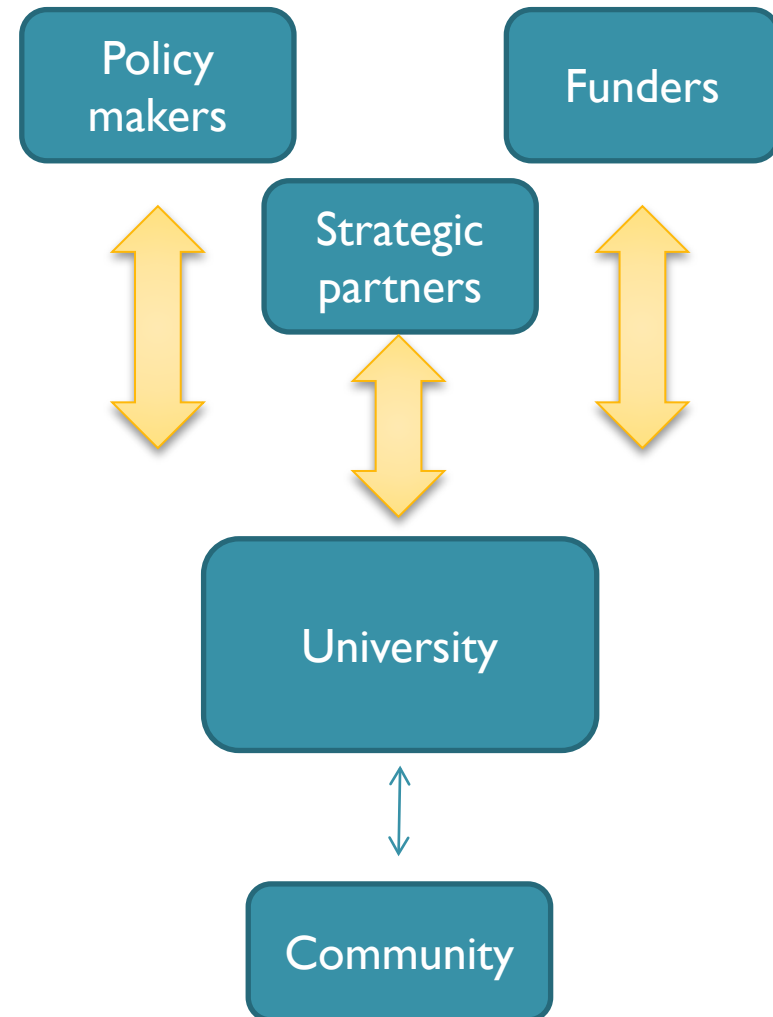
Community

Pathways for institutional transformation?

- Perserverant peripheral projects willing to build core value-added relationships
- Clear mutual benefits for communities/ core university activities in CVAPs
- Strong outside interests holding universities to account for CE
- Gradual evolution towards 'modes of engagement' fitted to institutional path
- Dealing with the tensions, problems and distractions that otherwise arise…