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Advancing Social Change Goals through Partnership: Community Partner Perspectives

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VITA

Liezl Alcantara was born in Seattle, Washington on August 15, 1983. She graduated

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Successfully attaining social change goals requires coordinated efforts between multiple stakeholders. Alliances among people and organizations across sectors to work toward a common purpose are known as partnerships, collaborations, and coalitions (Himmelman, 1992; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Partnerships and coalitions can serve to connect the strengths and expertise of individuals, groups, and institutions to increase partners' ability to ultimately achieve social change (Doll et al., 2012; Harper, Contreras, Bangi, & Pedraza, 2004). Institutions such as community-based organizations (CBOs) and universities can drive social change processes by mobilizing groups of individuals to act together synergistically through programming, education, research, and advocacy.

University departments and centers form partnerships with CBOs to address a variety of social change goals and social issues. Relationships form between researchers and professors/students/staff members at universities and representatives from CBOs for specific objectives, including improving health and mental health outcomes for young people and their families (Chorpita & Mueller, 2008; Corona, Gonzalez, Cohen, Edwards, & Edmonds, 2009; Goodkind et al., 2011), enhancing public participation in community development and neighborhood revitalization projects (Córdova, 2011; Seung Ja Doe & Lowery, 2005), promoting community health practice (Hawley et al., 2007; Lough, 1999; Richards, Novak, & Davis, 2009), and augmenting resources for communities facing poverty, homelessness, or violence (Jaffe, Berman, & MacQuarrie, 2011; Sanderson & Richards, 2010; Gewirtz, 2007). Community health, well-being, and quality of life underlie many goals of partnerships between CBOs and universities.

Models of Partnerships

The structures of partnerships are as varied as the social issues they are designed to influence. Documented partnership models have been utilized across disciplines in order to better describe the development, functioning, and maintenance of these collaborative relationships. To account for partnerships' developmental nature, models often follow a chronological progression in describing processes and outcomes. Fawcett et al. (1995) described a framework for the process of empowerment in collaborative partnerships that includes five interrelated elements: Collaborative Planning; Community Action; Community Change; Community Capacity and Outcomes; and Adaptation, Renewal, and Institutionalization. This transactional and reciprocal process allows for community members to influence leaders, CBOs, and public institutions who are charged with building community capacity to solve local issues (Fawcett et al., 1995). Exchanges also flow between partners through interpersonal processes. Drawing from social psychological theories and constructs, Bringle and Hatcher (2002) conceptualized community-university partnerships as interpersonal relationships that progress according to stages of Initiation, Development and Maintenance, and Dissolution. Bringle and Hatcher (2002) asserted that partnerships must preserve the integrity of each partner while honoring shared goals and individual growth.

Ensuring successful collaboration and minimizing barriers can be facilitated by conducting preliminary work on the feasibility of the partnership through reflective questions (Harper & Salina, 2000). Harper and Salina's (2000) six-stage University-CBO Collaborative Partnership (UCCP) Model included: 1. Selecting a potential CBO partner; 2. Developing a reciprocal relationship; 3. Deciding on a research question; 4. Conducting the research/evaluation; 5. Analyzing and interpreting the data; and 6. Dissemination. Partnership

factors are dynamic, fluid, and rooted in CBOs and community settings. Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis (2005) provided an interactive and contextual model with interrelated components involved in community-university partnerships: Gaining Entry into Community; Developing and Sustaining a Mutual Collaboration; Recognizing Benefits and Outcomes of Community-University Partnerships; and Potential Challenges and Threats to Community-University Partnerships. These authors suggested that when partnerships are truly collaborative, partners become agents of social change. The SOFAR model moved beyond "community" and "campus" to account for the multiple players within service-learning and civic engagement relationships: Students, Organizations in the community, Faculty, Administrators on campus, and Residents in the community (Bringle, Clayton, & Price, 2009; Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq, & Morrison, 2010). Similar to the model posited by Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005), the SOFAR model illustrates the interrelated and mutually influential nature of all members of partnership.

Community-university partnerships have also employed community-based research and evaluation models to accomplish their goals. Nation, Bess, Voight, Perkins, and Juarez (2011) provided case examples of two forms of community-engaged research: *Community Initiation*, in which community partners organize to address a need prior to researcher entry, and *Community Collaboration*, in which the project is researcher-initiated and receives substantial ideas and direction from community entities. Khodyakov et al. (2011) developed their conceptual model for evaluating research partnerships from the partnership synergy model of Lasker, Weiss, and Miller (2001) and Weiss, Anderson, and Lasker (2002). Khodyakov et al.'s model extends the previous model by including partnership characteristics, pointing to the various interrelated influences between that element and partnership functioning, synergy, and community/policy-level and personal-level outcomes. Models of partnership have been put forward to explain

interdisciplinary collaborations, cross-sector research ventures, and joint projects for prevention and intervention. Understanding the relationships between partnership factors and players can help frame questions regarding processes, outcomes, and areas of improvement.

Characteristics of Partnerships

Despite the many varied models that exist, researchers have corroborated on certain elements, factors, and indicators of successful community-university partnerships. Common themes emerge, including trust, respect, leadership, mutual benefit, shared ownership, and equity. Table 1 displays the primary community-university partnership characteristics that researchers have identified as integral to success.

Table 1.
Characteristics of Successful Community-University Partnerships

Authors	Project and/or Context	Characteristics
Doll et al. (2012)	Facilitators of coalition functioning over time	(1) Developing group trust and cohesion (2) Creating diverse membership (3) Developing a shared vision (4) Ensuring clarity of purpose and goals
Gilbert, Quinn, Ford, and Thomas (2011)	Organizational and community capacity indicators	(1) Leadership (2) Institutional commitment (3) Trust (4) Credibility (5) Inter-organizational networks
Miao, Umemoto, Gonda, and Hishinuma (2011)	Essential elements for community engagement in evidence-based youth violence prevention	(1) Common vision (2) Inclusivity (3) Collaboration (4) Leadership and capacity building (5) Social learning
Davis, Olson, Jason, Alvarez, and Ferrari (2008)	Guidelines for developing and maintaining effective action research collaboratives	(1) Cultivate trust (2) Open lines of communication (3) Look for opportunities to promote social justice and change (4) Look to mobilize and utilize existing resources (5) Accommodate diverse agendas (6) Bring respect (7) Operationalize and validate results within context (8) Reflect critically on one's roles, values, and attitudes (9) Appreciate the dynamics of role evolution (10) Take a strengths-based approach (11) Exeunt gracefully
Miller and Hafner (2008)	Indicators of success in university-community collaboration	(1) Mutuality (2) Supportive and strategic leadership (3) Assets-based building (4) Sound processes

Authors	Project and/or Context	Characteristics
Minkler, Vasquez, Tajik, and Petersen (2008)	Dimensions of community and partnership capacity relevant to environmental health	(1) Leadership (2) Participation (3) Skills (4) Resources (5) Social and organizational networks (6) Sense of community and of partnership identity (7) Understanding of community/partnership history (8) Community/partnership power (9) Shared values (10) Critical reflection
Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH, 2006)	Key insights and ingredients of effective, authentic community-higher education partnerships	(1) Strong relationships of trust, honesty, transparency, respect, equity (2) Mutual benefit of all partners (3) Shared ownership of the project and partnership (4) Clear roles and expectations of all partners (5) Support from a funding agency that understands how equal partnerships are developed and sustained (6) Community partners are valued and compensated for their expertise (7) Community and academic partners gain transferable skills (8) Peer networks established in the community for mentoring, learning and sharing of best practices
Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (2006)	Framework for authentic community-higher education partnerships	(1) Quality processes (2) Meaningful outcomes (3) Transformation
Seifer (2006)	Common characteristics of successful community-institutional partnerships for prevention research	(1) Trusting relationships (2) Equitable processes and procedures (3) Diverse membership (4) Tangible benefits to all partners (5) Balance between partnership process, activities and outcomes (6) Significant community involvement in scientifically sound research (7) Supportive organizational policies and

Authors	Project and/or Context	Characteristics
		reward structures (8) Leadership at multiple levels (9) Culturally competent and appropriately skilled staff and researchers (10) Collaborative dissemination (11) Ongoing partnership assessment, improvement and celebration (12) Sustainable impact
Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis (2005)	Key factors in developing and sustaining a mutual collaboration	(1) Developing trust and mutual respect (2) Establishing adequate communication (3) Respecting human diversity (4) Establish a culture of learning (5) Respecting the culture of the setting and the community (6) Developing an action agenda
Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, and Donohue (2003)	Principles that underlie practice of community-based research	Orientation toward one another: (1) Share a worldview (2) Agree about goals and strategies (3) Have mutual trust and mutual respect Interaction patterns and norms: (4) Share power (5) Communicate clearly and listen carefully (6) Understand and empathize with one another's circumstances (7) Remain flexible Desired outcomes or results of partnership: (8) Partners' primary interests or needs are met (9) Partners' organizational capacities are enhanced (10) Partners adopt shared, long-range social change perspectives
Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, and Allen (2001)	Collaborative capacity in community coalitions	(1) Member capacity (2) Relational capacity (3) Organizational capacity (4) Programmatic capacity

The extensive list of characteristics showcases the multiple necessary factors for success from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Developing, implementing, sustaining, and improving partnerships is complex and, unfortunately, does not operate under ideal conditions in the "real world." To create equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships between universities and CBOs, each partner's point of view must be examined. Unfortunately, much of the extant literature on community-university partnerships has been primarily focused on the viewpoints and perspectives of those representing the "university" side of the partnership.

University Perspectives of Partnership

Community-university partnerships may serve different purposes, including conducting research, providing learning opportunities for students, facilitating service provision to the community, or some combination of these objectives. Such partnerships are often attractive to institutions of higher education since colleges and universities are invested in responding to the needs of present and future students and to enrich student learning through research, engagement, and experiential real-world preparation (Kellogg Commission, 1999). Academics and higher education administrators are actively embracing the notion of "the engaged campus" as a necessity in expanding classroom learning to include civic learning (Jacoby, 2003). A critical component of institutionalizing civic education and community engagement is the pedagogy and practice of community-based service learning. The unprecedented growth of the field of service learning is illustrated by the fact that the number of members of Campus Compact, the foremost national coalition promoting service-learning in higher education, has increased from 3 institutions in 1985 to over 1,100 in 2009, nearly a quarter of all colleges and universities in the United States (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010).

Within the extant literature, examination of community-university partnerships has primarily focused on student outcomes and university perspectives. Outcomes of university programs, initiatives, and service-learning curricula have included building skills, capacity, and knowledge for students involved in internships (Hynie, Jensen, Johnny, Welock, & Phipps, 2010), for students involved in after-school program training (Mahoney, Levine, & Hinga, 2010), and for students involved in cross-cultural curricular activities (Hogner & Kenworthy, 2010). Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, Miron, & McFarland (2002) developed the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire to measure changes in students' skills, awareness, and attitudes as a result of service learning experiences. Perspectives of faculty are also widely discussed. Seifer and Calleson (2004) captured health professional faculty members' perceptions of internal and external forces for a school's involvement in community-based research. In particular, the authors pointed to the importance of faculty promotion and tenure policies and facilitative institutional structures in ensuring faculty members' success in conducting community-based research projects.

Researchers have documented perspectives of faculty and students in terms of partnership challenges. Small, Tiwari, and Huser (2006) described the obstacles experienced by academic evaluators through a community-based project with an underserved racial ethnic population. Rosing, Reed, Ferrari, and Bothne (2010) detailed barriers to successful service learning as perceived by students, including criticism about the site, concerns about site choices, and time and scheduling difficulties. Researchers have also taken into account the nuanced nature of partnerships to allow for deeper examination into concepts of exchange, reciprocity, and mutual benefit. Bringle and Hatcher (2002) noted that institutions have undergone a shift from treating communities as passive receivers of service or research to active partners integral to the success

of projects and relationships. In a case study of a service learning project, Konwerski and

Nashman (2002) included student, faculty, university administrator, and agency representative

perspectives to assess the critical points of exchange as well as the shared roles of learners and

educators. Understanding the complexities of partnerships requires obtaining information from

multiple sources and the voice of community partners must not be overlooked.

Community Impacts of Partnership

Within recent years, some researchers have turned their attention to assessing community

impact of community-university partnerships. Nationally and internationally, scholars assert that

research must critically evaluate impacts of service learning and community engagement on

students, faculty, *and* community partners and, most importantly, on the social, economic, and

political issues the partnership seeks to transform. Increasingly, researchers are addressing the

benefits of partnerships given to community partners and the community at large. Research by

Worrall (2007) indicated that partnerships resulted in CBO representatives' increased access to

volunteers and expansion of organization resources. On a community- and systems-level,

Davidson, Jiminez, Onifade, & Hankins (2010) documented reduction in recidivism rates and

policy change outcomes from a community-university partnership. Systemic effects targeted by

the service learning model employed by Davidson et al. (2010) often go unexplored in the

partnership literature.

Feedback from community partners is becoming more integral to the body of partnership

literature. Brodsky et al. (2004) documented contextual factors of researcher and participant-

researcher relationships through the lens of CBO staff members. Likewise, Bayne-Smith,

Mizrahi, and Garcia (2008) described successful interdisciplinary community collaboration

strategies as well as failures and challenges from the perspective of community partners. In a

piece co-authored by several CBO staff members, Harper et al. (2004) provided insights from

clients and CBO staff on the benefits of a collaborative partnership for HIV prevention

intervention for adolescents. Community partners convened through Community-Campus

Partnerships for Health (2006) identified the essential components of sharing credit, ownership,

and benefit in ensuring authentic partnerships. Insights from community members and CBO

representatives engaged with university research projects have also highlighted negative

characteristics of partnerships, including lack of tangible benefit and lack of program

sustainability (Sullivan et al., 2001). Other nuanced perspectives of partnerships from CBO staff

members emerged from in-depth interviews that addressed CBOs' goals and motivations, finding

and selecting service learners, challenges of structuring short-term service learning, managing

service learners and projects, diversity, relationship and communication with the higher

education institutions, and indicators of success (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009; Tryon & Stoecker,

2008). Eliciting community perspectives is vital to maximizing partnership potential.

The sustainability of successful partnerships and improvement of partner relations hinges

upon evaluating partnership outcomes and integrating community feedback into practice.

Acknowledging the underdeveloped community voice in the literature, Sandy and Holland

(2006) noted the growing desire of service learning practitioners to learn more about community

perspectives and transform partnerships in light of community partners' input. Through

community partner focus groups, the authors captured perceptions of campus-community

partnerships including motivations for participation, benefits to the academic institution and to

their own organization, impacts on student learning, and areas for improving partnerships. Doll

et al. (2012) investigated partnership functioning over time within multiple coalitions, capturing

perspectives of both researchers and community partners on factors that facilitate or inhibit

coalition functioning. Alcantara, Harper, and Keys (under review) found that at the onset of partnerships, community partners asserted that their contributions are more varied than researchers', yet they perceived that researchers acquire more kinds of benefits. Understanding community partners' perspectives on the community-university relationship can illuminate how best to achieve successful and mutually beneficial partnership outcomes.

Research and evaluation processes are changing to allow for input to be gathered from community partners. King et al. (2010) measured impacts of research partnerships between communities and universities. The authors' tool to measure the Community Impacts of Research Oriented Partnerships (CIROP) addresses personal knowledge development, personal research skill development, organizational/group access to and use of information, community and organizational development, and the partnership's major areas of impact and areas of least impact (King et al., 2003). The CIROP measure is publically accessible via the internet. Beyond individual-level outcomes, Roussos and Fawcett (2000) provided a comprehensive review of partnership outcomes as community and systems change, community-wide behavior change and population-level health outcomes. The authors' recommendations to enhance partnership practice, to improve research and evaluation within partnerships, and to set conditions under which partnerships can be successful largely reflected partnership characteristics corroborated in the literature. However, attention to practical concerns such as financial support, technical assistance, sustainability, and social determinants that lead to unequal outcomes broadened the typical level of analysis associated with partnership research.

Directly following Roussos and Fawcett's (2000) recommendations, a need arises for more concerted inquiry into the ability of partnerships to address outcomes beyond the individual level. To continue the groundwork laid by previous research, future explorations must integrate

community perspectives into partnership assessment. As presented, joint initiatives target a variety of social issues. Of particular importance is the prospect of promoting positive youth development through collaborative ventures. Local, national, and international entities have expressed urgency about the adverse effects of the recent economic crisis on young people, from persistent childhood poverty (Ratcliffe & McKernan, 2010), to teenage and young adult unemployment and underemployment (International Labour Organization, 2010; Sum & McLaughlin, 2010). Responding to challenging community conditions and opportunities for impact, the United States' Department of Education is currently implementing policy strategies to effect change. A national initiative called Promise Neighborhoods posits that significant positive youth outcomes will result if young people are supported educationally and socio-developmentally from cradle to career (Promise Neighborhoods Institute, 2011). To be successful, the initiative relies upon coordinated cross-sector efforts to ensure structural, environmental, and systemic support for youth development.

Such coordinated cross-sector efforts include community-university partnerships. Partnerships between universities and CBOs have historically connected resources between institutions and communities for youth development impact (see Chicago Area Project, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, and the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University). Two centers within DePaul University, the Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning and the Egan Urban Center (EUC), are notable for connecting the university to the community. The current investigation will center on these two centers and their partnerships with CBOs and communities at large. To better understand the nature of DePaul's relationship with CBOs through the Steans Center and the EUC, a brief overview of each center's founding, development, mission, and work follows.

Both centers are situated within DePaul University, the largest Catholic institution of higher learning in the United States. DePaul comprises diverse students, faculty, and staff members representing a wide range of ages, abilities, and experiences as well as faith, racial, and ethnic identities. The university predominantly serves students from the greater Chicago area and has an explicit commitment to educating first generation college students. Deriving its title from St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Congregation of the Mission, the university remains inextricably linked to his devotion to serving urgent human needs and ennobling the God-given dignity of each person (DePaul University Office of Mission and Values, 2012). Its Catholic, Vincentian, and urban character, exemplified through special concern for deprived members of society and assisting communities find solutions to their problems, distinguishes DePaul among other universities (DePaul University, 2012).

The Steans Center emerged from an institutional response to a call to renew American higher education's commitment to the common good (Strain, 1998). In 1997, university leadership identified that one of three educational goals would include expansion of experiential and service learning opportunities into all colleges. The Office for Community-based Service Learning was established to accomplish this goal and then later renamed the Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning in 2001 after receiving an endowment from the Steans Family. The mission of the Steans Center is:

> To provide educational opportunities grounded in Vincentian community values to DePaul students. The Center seeks to develop mutually beneficial, reciprocal relationships with community organizations in order to develop a sense of social agency in our students through enrollment in Community-based service learning courses, community internships and placements, and community-based student employment (Steans Center, 2012).

Notably, there exist historical divisions between the university and community stemming from DePaul's role in neighborhood development. In 2002, Steans Center community partners

candidly drew attention to DePaul's part in spurring gentrification by purchasing property in the neighborhood surrounding the university, which was predominantly Puerto Rican and working class at the time. As a result, families were displaced into communities west of the university. These community partners insisted that although they were not seeking help, it was nonetheless "imperative" for DePaul to engage with their neighborhood CBOs (Rosing, 2008). Echoing Dempsey (2010), acknowledging the negative ramifications of university development and expansion into neighborhoods can help in overcoming the distrust communities feel toward universities. The Steans Center has sought to do this by developing asset-based partnerships with CBOs that involve upholding the value of local knowledge and respecting community members as sources and sharers of that knowledge. The Center also houses Community Service Studies, an interdisciplinary curricular program that provides students context for critically reflecting upon and engaging in service. Through its service learning courses, community internships, and other community-based placement opportunities, the Steans Center supports over 3,000 students per year and partners with over 300 community organizations locally and internationally (Steans Center Annual Report, 2010).

The Egan Urban Center was founded in 1994 with grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust to connect DePaul with Chicago communities. The EUC began as a means for the university to honor and further the work of Monsignor John J. "Jack" Egan, a legendary Chicago figure and nationally recognized champion of civil rights and social justice, by developing a responsible, self-reflexive, and action-oriented approach to community engagement. The EUC aims to build meaningful partnerships within communities, broker resources for community-based development, connect university resources

with community partners, and conduct community work through an asset-based and participatory

approach (EUC, 2009). The mission of the EUC states:

> The Monsignor John J. Egan Urban Center represents DePaul University's tangible and
> enduring commitment to the research, development, deliverance and transfer of
> innovative education-based programs and services that have a significant social impact.
> Our mission gives concrete expression to the University's Vincentian commitment by
> extending opportunities for DePaul to collaborate with the Chicago community to
> alleviate poverty, promote social justice and address critical urban problems through
> teaching, service and scholarship (EUC, 2012).

Although less engaged through formal university curricular teaching, the EUC is involved in

technical assistance, community building initiatives, research and evaluation support, and data

and policy analysis for CBOs and communities. The EUC engages in funded, multi-year

projects and initiatives as well as informal events and programs. In addition, the EUC offers a

certificate in Community Engagement with DePaul's Continuing and Professional Education

targeted toward those working in local communities who seek skills in ensuring that their work is

sustainable, effective, and responsive to community members' strengths and needs. The EUC

also convenes community groups through its publically accessible meeting space, which is

offered as part of the Center's efforts to initiate and support collaborative endeavors, cooperative

planning, and organizational capacity-building. Like the Steans Center, the EUC has co-

cultivated many enduring relationships with community partners.

Since Winter 2008, the Steans and Egan Urban Centers have been formally affiliated in

joint efforts to engage faculty, students, and staff in community development projects throughout

Chicago neighborhoods. The merger has stimulated discussion around reevaluating each

Center's work, provided students new opportunities for scholarship and action, and initiated

projects using critical reflection as a method for community knowledge production. The Steans

and Egan Urban Centers serve as visible manifestations of the university commitment to building

partnerships with CBOs and community members. Such partnerships are equipped to carry out

research, service provision, and advocacy directed toward engaging children and youth.

Successful partnerships between universities and CBOs have the potential to critically address

social issues and attain social change goals, but to what extent do existing partnerships actualize

this potential?

Ability of Partnership to Advance Social Change Goals of Community

The current project employs the framework designed by Marullo et al. (2003) to assess

social change activities associated with community-based research. Reminiscent of

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989, 1993) ecological structure of nested levels of influence on

adolescent development, Marullo et al.'s (2003) framework is defined according to micro, meso,

and macro levels of analysis. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of the model.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Community-Based Research Assessments (Marullo et al., 2003)

Marullo et al. (2003) described four types of outcome goals associated with social change

initiatives:

> To enhance the capacity of individuals or organizations; to increase the efficiency of an organization's operations (i.e. to deliver goods and services better); to empower constituents to become more effective agents of change on their own behalf; and to alter policies or structural arrangements to benefit the disadvantaged (Marullo et al., 2003, p. 62).

According to the authors, *enhancing capacity* refers to increasing the skills, resources, or

attributes of a particular group of individuals to deliver more and better resources; *increasing*

efficiency refers to improving the quality of service delivery to the target population by utilizing

existing organizational resources more effectively; *empowering constituents* refers to organizing

a defined group of individuals around particular efforts to enhance their quality of life; *altering*

policies or structural arrangements refers to modifying institutional operations or power

relations to effect positive change in the lives of the marginalized, oppressed, and disadvantaged.

Marullo et al. (2003) also associated each type of social change goal with process and effect

outcomes. The framework provided by Marullo et al. (2003) provides the theoretical

background for the current project, which entails capturing community partner perspectives on

the ability of university-community partnerships to advance social change goals.

<u>Rationale</u>

Through the proposed study, we intend to learn about the experiences of representatives

from CBOs involved in partnership with DePaul University's Steans Center for Community-

based Service Learning and Egan Urban Center. The present study explores the perspectives of

community partners regarding the extent to which partnerships between universities and

communities influence CBOs. Also, the study aims to capture community partners' perceptions

of ideal partnerships to inform best practices for collaboration. The major purpose of the current

project is to advance knowledge and understanding about perceptions of community-university

partnerships from the perspective of representatives of community-based organizations.

Building on existing literature, this examination uniquely contributes insights based on a concise

yet comprehensive framework of partnership impact. Research questions pinpoint what

specifically, if at all, partnerships add or detract from CBO organizational functioning. By

focusing on the nuances of university engagement with CBOs, the current study connects

specific elements of impact with broad social change goals held by community partners.

Underlying assumptions of partnership involvement such as inherent benefit to CBOs are

addressed by examining both positive and negative elements of partnership.

<p style="text-align:center;">Research Questions</p>

1. What are CBO representatives' experiences of effects and processes associated with
   community-university partnerships?

   a. Social change goal 1: Increasing capacity

      i. Effects

      ii. Processes

   b. Social change goal 2: Enhancing efficiency

      i. Effects

      ii. Processes

   c. Social change goal 3: Improving ability to empower constituents

      i. Effects

      ii. Processes

   d. Social change goal 4: Improving ability to alter policies or structures

      i. Effects

       ii. Processes

2. What are community partners' perceptions of the ideal community-university

partnership?

    a. Characteristics

    b. Structure

CHAPTER II

METHOD

This study was qualitative and guided by a phenomenological research approach. Given the exploratory nature of this study, qualitative methods were chosen to serve a descriptive purpose regarding the topic of community-university partnerships (Creswell, 1998). Phenomenology is rooted in the notion that the reality of a phenomenon is understood through an individual's perception of that reality (Creswell, 1998). The approach employed by the current examination focuses on capturing the essence of a phenomenon by depicting the shared elements of experience of individuals who have experienced the specific phenomenon (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007). Within this study, the aim was to learn about the *experience* of partnering with universities in relation to the *phenomenon* of partnership outcomes and processes. The phenomenon in question, experienced by representatives from youth-serving CBOs, is organized according to four types of social change goals and perceptions of the ideal partnership.

Research Participants

Participation in the study was extended to representatives from community-based organizations that have partnered with DePaul University's Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning and Egan Urban Center within the past ten years. To capture data from CBOs with comparative service populations, potential participating organizations were identified as youth-serving and focused on issues of youth development based on organizational mission, initiatives, programs, and activities. The number of participating community partners was twenty representing nineteen CBOs. All organizations are located within the city of Chicago or surrounding suburbs. Given the qualitative nature of the proposed study, a sample of twenty was

believed to be adequate to achieve informational redundancy and saturation, yet not too large to

prohibit deep case-oriented analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Of the total number of respondents, fourteen participants identified their university

partner as the Steans Center, three participants stated affiliation with the Egan Urban Center, and

three participants cited partnership with both centers. Sixteen participants stated that they were

currently involved in partnership with DePaul University. Almost all respondents (N=19) noted

that their expectations had been met in partnership. The one respondent who stated 'Maybe'

attributed her answer to her CBO's relatively new relationship with the university. The majority

of CBOs who participated in the study have less than one hundred full-time and part-time staff

members, total. Eleven CBOs have budgets over $1 million, which can be explained by the

large-scale nature of some organizations that operate multiple sites throughout the United States.

There was a range of representation across jobs within the sample, including

administration/leadership and front-line staff members.

Nine respondents noted that their CBOs had worked with the university for less than five

years and eleven respondents stated that their CBOs had worked with the university for over five

years. Most participants affirmed that formal (N=14) or informal (N=3) contracts and

agreements were associated with the partnership. Of these participants, four people noted that

the formal contract known as the "linkage agreement" was recently introduced to their CBOs by

the Steans Center. One participant stated that no contract existed between the CBO and the

university, another participant did not know whether or not a contract was developed, and one

other participant said that the use of contracts depended on the nature of the project. Table 2

illustrates the overall composition of CBOs and CBO representatives who participated in the

study based on selected information.

Table 2.
Composition of CBO Representatives and CBOs

Demographic Information		N
Total Number of Staff Members (N=18)	Less than 20 staff members	7
	20-99 staff members	6
	100-500 staff members	3
	Over 500 staff members	2
Budget of CBO (N=17)	Less than $50,000	1
	$50,000-$249,999	2
	$250,000-$499,999	1
	$500,000-$1,000,000	1
	Over $1,000,000	11
Job Title of CBO Representative (N=20)	Volunteer Coordinator	1
	Program Coordinator	5
	Program Director	2
	Director of Development	2
	Associate Director	5
	Executive Director	5
Number of Years CBO Worked with University (N=20)	Less than 5 years	9
	5-9 years	6
	10 years or over	5

The sample consisted of staff members who have served as primary contacts for service-learning, research, and evaluation projects with DePaul students, faculty/instructors, and/or staff members. The list of agencies contacted was created from information obtained through databases internal to the Steans Center and Egan Urban Centers. The researcher, who obtained administrative permission from both centers to access these databases, compiled the list to include contact person(s), position title, CBO name, e-mail address, and phone number. Recruitment was conducted via e-mail messages requesting participation in the research study. See Appendix A for recruitment materials.

Measures

At the onset of the interview, basic demographic information relevant to understanding the institutional partnership was collected, such as length of relationship with the university. Minimal demographic data was solicited and recorded in order to protect the confidentiality of respondents and to increase the likelihood of participation. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide. Interview questions addressed how participation with DePaul University and/or other universities has influenced the CBO and how CBO representatives perceive the ideal partnership between the CBO and collaborating universities. The interview guide was divided into six sections that contained primary questions and subsequent probes. The first section included basic demographic questions to learn more about each participant and his or her CBO. Six items comprised each of the following four sections directed toward the types of social change goals: Increasing capacity, enhancing efficiency, improving the ability to empower constituents, and improving the ability to alter policies or structures. Two questions comprised the section dealing with CBO representatives' perceptions of the ideal partnership between CBOs and universities.

Sample questions in the interview guide included: "Please describe your experiences associated with **enhancing capacity** as a result of the university partnership. (What are the ways in which the partnership has helped, hurt, didn't help, or didn't hurt your CBO's **capacity**?)" and "What are the **effects** of these experiences associated with **capacity**? What are the effects at the individual, agency/organizational, and community levels?" See Table 3 for Interview Guide Scheme and Appendix B for the Interview Guide.

Table 3.
Interview Guide Scheme

Primary Content Area	Specific Area of Inquiry				
Capacity	Positive Individual-level Effects	Positive Organizational-level Effects	Positive Community-level Effects	Not Positive Effects at Any Level	Processes
Efficiency	Positive Individual-level Effects	Positive Organizational-level Effects	Positive Community-level Effects	Not Positive Effects at Any Level	Processes
Empowering Constituents	Positive Individual-level Effects	Positive Organizational-level Effects	Positive Community-level Effects	Not Positive Effects at Any Level	Processes
Altering Policies or Structures	Positive Individual-level Effects	Positive Organizational-level Effects	Positive Community-level Effects	Not Positive Effects at Any Level	Processes
Ideal Partnership	Characteristics			Structure	

Procedure

The method of data collection was in-depth qualitative interviews, which were conducted either over the phone or in-person, depending on the preference of the community partner. Two upper-level Psychology doctoral students each facilitated one interview and the researcher carried out eighteen interviews with CBO representatives. Sixteen interviews were conducted over the phone and four interviews were conducted in-person. In-person interviews were conducted on-site at the CBO or at DePaul University (Steans Center at the Lincoln Park Campus or Egan Urban Center at the Loop Campus). Both in-person and telephone interviews were audio-recorded. At the beginning of each interview session, the interviewer read the information sheet aloud to the participant and received consent to start recording. The interviewer asked the questions contained within the interview guide, probing for clarification and follow-up, if necessary.

Analysis

The present study yielded information regarding the influence of universities on community-based organizations as well as characteristics of the ideal community-university partnership from the perspective of community partners. An inductive analysis procedure was utilized to allow patterns, themes, and categories of analysis to emerge from the transcribed interview data. The approach to analysis was phenomenological in nature to address the essence of the lived experiences of CBO representatives regarding aspects of community-university partnerships (Creswell & Maietta, 2002). The focus of the current examination was on individual and shared experiences and the meanings given to those experiences, which resulted in clustered respondents' statements into categories of common narratives. Through this approach, the researcher examines each individual's experiences, draws connections to the

experiences of similar others, and uncovers the larger framework to describe the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 1998).

To begin the analysis, a priori themes were identified based on the theoretical framework and interview guide. Multiple steps were involved in the inductive analysis process. First, the transcript of each interview was read thoroughly. Each of the responses were reviewed, compared with all other responses across the interviews, and grouped based on similar emergent themes and identified a priori themes. A descriptive label and its definition were assigned to the text to capture the content of the statements. The themes were reviewed and discussed with a peer group of colleagues to ensure that categorization of data was relevant and comprehensible. The group was composed of three upper-level Psychology doctoral students with extensive experience in qualitative data analysis. Through weekly meetings led by the researcher's advisor over the course of four months, themes were refined and finalized. After examining themes within each individual interview, cross-case analyses were conducted. Data were categorized within a matrix for organization purposes after coding refinement. Characteristic quotes were used to illustrate the concepts and themes revealed through the interviews. Quotes were de-identified to ensure anonymity.

Activities took place to ensure credibility of findings. The researcher conducted negative case analysis to consider cases and instances that appear contrary to given patterns (Creswell, 1998). Peer debriefing and member-checking were used to confirm the consistency of data coding and analysis, minimization of researcher bias, and accuracy of researcher's portrayal of participants' realities and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Specifically, an introductory meeting convened with community partners and university staff members familiar with community-university partnerships to test and refine the interview questions. Also, ongoing

meetings with peers facilitated conversations around data credibility. Strong efforts were made to support the quality of data throughout the research process.

<u>Bracketing of Experiences</u>

The phenomenological approach fundamentally rests on understanding the essence of an experience from the perspective of individuals who have lived the experience. It is essential that the researcher bracket any previous experiences related to the phenomenon being examined. Phenomenological data analysis adheres to a reduction methodology, comprising an analysis of specific statements and themes and a search for all possible meanings (Creswell, 1998). To keep balanced between subjectivity and objectivity, the researcher must expose any internally-held biases, ensuring that emergent themes validly represent the data and not the researcher's preconceptions and prejudgments. A critical self-reflection of my personal background, my social position, the development of my perspectives on social change, my experiences with community-university partnerships, and my interest in this intellectual pursuit follows.

I am a 28-year-old Filipino American female. I was raised in a middle class, Catholic family in Seattle, Washington by my parents and grandmother, all who emigrated from the Philippines in the late 1970s and early 1980s to escape martial law and widespread governmental corruption. From middle school through graduate school, I have attended Catholic mission-driven educational institutions that explicitly focus on service. My school, church, and extra-curricular activities during middle and high school included hospital volunteering, mission trips, mentoring youth of color, and other direct service-related pursuits. I attended my first service learning class in high school. My educational and social environments through college predominantly comprised middle and upper class White students. I grew up acutely aware of our

family's racial and ethnic identity, made salient by perceived and actual discrimination experienced by my parents.

Attending a Jesuit liberal arts university as an undergraduate introduced me to issues of power, oppression, and justice in the form of sexual assault prevention and education work. From there, I became motivated to combine my passion for justice with my educational and professional goals. Immersion experiences through a year-long study abroad in Italy, a year-long Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in South Korea, and a short-term study abroad in Manila, Philippines were incredibly formative to my understanding and appreciation for cultural interface. The trip to the Philippines, facilitated through DePaul University, Adamson University, and the Steans Center, was especially personal for me as it was the first time anyone from my immediate family had "returned" to the country. It was also compelling because the study abroad course focused on community-based participatory research and evaluation methods with displaced populations living in basic government-assisted housing.

After my trip to the Philippines, I became involved as an ally for Chicago public housing development residents seeking to preserve their homes. In Spring 2010, I served as instructor for a Junior Year Experiential Learning field studies course where I implemented service learning and community engagement projects in which my students worked alongside public housing residents. Through this course, I encountered challenges in facilitating mutually beneficial and meaningful experiences for my students and community partners. Beyond logistical issues tied to scheduling, philosophical tensions arose stemming from some students' cognitive dissonance surrounding service, community development, and activism. I have been working in a research and evaluation capacity with the Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning, the Egan Urban Center, and DePaul University Ministry for the past five years. I have also served as an

independent consultant for CBOs to conduct community-based research and evaluation projects.

The primary objectives in my community-engaged work are to build authentic relationships from

a standpoint of cultural humility, to espouse asset-based approaches to collaboration, and to

produce deliverables that make sense and make meaningful change. The current study

exemplifies these objectives in its exploration of community-university partnerships, associated

effects and processes, and the ways in which partnerships can be more inclusive of ideal

characteristics and structures.

Within the present research, my unique perspective shaped interpretations of the data.

The experiences and personal aspects highlighted here materialized during analysis in various

ways. For one, my background led me to adopt a critical standpoint on challenges faced by

CBOs and CBO representatives. My desire to discover how all stakeholders view partnership

success stems from being entrenched in an institution focused primarily on student outcomes

with regard to community-university partnerships. Nonetheless, I have been exposed to rich and

diverse perspectives on what makes community-engaged practice effective. In my roles of

researcher and evaluator for the university and for various CBOs, I have extensively reviewed

and reported on feedback from students, faculty, and community partners regarding their

partnership experiences. In undertaking the analysis within the current study, I have attempted to

amplify the voices of CBO representatives whose experiential knowledge can be capitalized to

improve relationships between communities and universities.

Of note, my connections to university students, faculty, and staff members, as well as

CBO representatives, have formed my contextual understanding of partnership components.

Familiarity with specific projects and initiatives between community and university partners

influenced how I described and explained the data. I directly served as a primary university

partner in some cases depicted within the current study. As an active participant and observer, I acknowledge that my relationships obscure the balance between subjectivity and objectivity. My personal affiliations with the Steans Center, the Egan Urban Center, and CBOs not only provided me entrée, but also insight into the inner workings of partnerships between communities and universities. Such experiences affected my analysis of the data and must be considered when reviewing the results. I acknowledge that I am not an unbiased, disconnected third party in this work, which is arguably values-based. On one hand, the potential valence of my bias leans towards challenging overly idealized notions of partnership, specifically partnerships focused on service learning. In my capacity as evaluator, I have been impelled to question the assumption that mutually beneficial relationships between universities and communities exist or are even possible. On the other hand, my personal experiences as a community-based researcher within some projects described here have led me to see the potential of partnerships to make meaningful impacts. I have witnessed, first-hand, the gains from collaborative, participatory research ventures between CBOs and universities in which power and decision-making are shared between partners. I assert that the potential valence of my bias regarding community-based research and evaluation skews positively. In light of my multiple roles, I have endeavored to produce a critical and comprehensive account of how community partners distinguish partnerships' effects, processes, and ideal elements. To me, it is crucial to take a nuanced look at the perceived and actual benefits and obstacles faced by all parties within partnership.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The results contained herein depict the range of participants' experiences regarding

university partnerships. To address the present study's research questions, this section begins by

detailing participants' perspectives on partnership effects and processes typically associated with

social change goals. Participants' perceptions of the ideal partnership follow. For each content

area, themes are explained and are illustrated by one or more representative quotes. Participants'

CBO affiliations have been anonymized to protect participants' identities. Randomly assigned

numbers for participants and their CBOs parenthetically accompany each quote. Multiple

respondents from CBOs are distinguished from one another by number (e.g., R1 and R2 for

Respondent 1 and Respondent 2). Any other identifying pieces of information such as the

individual names of CBO and university staff members as well as neighborhood names have

been removed to ensure the confidentiality of participants. In some instances, the letter "R" or

"I" is used at the beginning of a statement to indicate that the respondent or interviewer is

speaking, respectively.

A priori codes and emergent themes were devised according to the following five content

areas: (1) experiences associated with enhancing or not enhancing capacity, (2) experiences

associated with increasing or not increasing efficiency, (3) experiences associated with

improving or not improving the ability to empower constituents, (4) experiences associated with

improving or not improving the ability to alter policies or structures, and (5) perceptions of the

ideal partnership. Additional emergent themes were also coded during the analysis process and

were grouped into these five content areas as well. See Table 3 for categories of themes related

to the first four content areas, and Table 4 for categories of themes related to the fifth content

area: perceptions of the ideal partnership.

Table 4.
Categories of Themes Associated with Capacity, Efficiency, Empowering Constituents, and Altering Policies and Structures

Primary Content Area	Positive Effects: Individual Level	Positive Effects: Organizational Level	Positive Effects: Community Level	Not Positive Effects: Any Level	Processes
Capacity	CBO Staff-related Factors Constituent-related Factors University Student-related Factors	Communication Organizational Resources and Practice	Presence Deeper Understanding Stronger Community	Challenges to Enhancing Capacity	Meetings and Trainings Partnership Logistics
Efficiency	CBO Staff-related Factors Constituent-related Factors	Use of Time Use of Money Effective and Organized Practices	CBO Service Delivery Youth Outreach	Challenges to Increasing Efficiency	CBO-driven Logistics University Partner-driven Operations Improvement
Ability to Empower Constituents	CBO Staff-related Factors Constituent-related Factors University-related Factors	Meeting Needs Self-reliant Practices	Relational Development Community Support and Resources	Challenges to Empowering Constituents	Meetings and Trainings Service and Community Engagement
Ability to Alter Policies or Structures	Change in Perspective	Advocacy about Work Advocacy for Policy Change	Change in Practice	Beyond Scope of Partnership	Applied Research University Student Development

Table 5.
Categories of Themes Associated with Perceptions of the Ideal Partnership

Primary Content Area	Ideal Characteristics	Ideal Structure
Perceptions of the Ideal Partnership	Reciprocity and Meaningful Exchange of Resources	Partnership Alignment
		Meetings, Trainings, and Orientations
	Expansion of Opportunities for Engagement and Access	Student Recruitment, Management, and Evaluation
	Individual Student Factors	
		Incentives, Activities, and Relationships to Deepen Connection between University and Community
	Effective Support through On-Campus Liaison	
	Clarity of Goals and Plan	
	Pipeline of Services and Education for Constituents	
	Valuing Community Knowledge and Voice	

Enhancing Capacity

The first area of inquiry was *Enhancing Capacity*, which was defined as increasing skills, resources, attributes, or relationships of a particular group of individuals; increasing an organization's ability to deliver more and better resources. The definition of capacity employed by the current project is distinguished from partnership capacity used elsewhere in the literature. For the sake of the current study, the capacity of partnerships to accomplish goals was not investigated, but rather the ability of partnership to affect capacity at individual, organizational, and community levels. In addition, the effects of not enhancing capacity will be described. Finally, processes associated with capacity will be shared.

Within the first thematic area regarding the effects of increased capacity on the <u>individual level</u>, three themes emerged from the data: *CBO Staff-related Factors*, *Constituent-related Factors*, and *University Student-related Factors*. The first individual-level *Enhancing Capacity* theme, *CBO Staff-related Factors*, refers to positive capacity effects related to staff members at the CBO. Respondents noted that the partnership built the individual capacities of staff members to do their work, meet needs, and develop their skills. In some cases, the quality of individuals' work increases as a result of having university students assist staff members. One participant described how university student interns provide extra hands-on help by attending to young people served through the CBO's direct programming, especially high school students facing difficulties:

> When we have an intern with us, depending on their skill set, we can usually send them out in the hallway to talk with the student and kind of get them back in the spot where they can meet with us. Or they can run the session while the staff member does. And so I think that that [allows us] to run sessions in a way that we wouldn't be able to do it if we didn't have the intern. So I think it just gives the individual working with that person on any project room to add to the quality of their work because you have another person there supporting you and being able to take up things that you can't do necessarily (CBO15).

In this manner, university student interns augment the capacity of individuals to do their work.

Other participants discussed how CBO staff members have increased their individual capacity to

participate in and drive research processes. For example, one participant noted how one of her

colleagues grew in her confidence to communicate about program outcomes, as refined through

an evaluation project with the university:

> One of our staff people...at the program coordinator level had an opportunity to talk with
> a private funder, someone from the philanthropic community who was asking about
> outcomes in an interview that preceded a funding decision. She was actually able to
> reference the report that [the university partner] had given us for her program and was
> able to articulate quite well the outcomes in such a way that the funder actually doubled
> the funding amount that [they] were considering for us (CBO16).

Beyond the products provided by the university partner, CBO staff members gain increased self-

assurance in utilizing the products effectively. In reference to their partnerships with

universities, CBO representatives shared real and tangible benefits regarding capacity building

on the individual level.

The second individual-level capacity theme, *Constituent-related Factors*, refers to

positive capacity effects related to constituents served by the CBO. Respondents noted that their

partnership with the university built the individual capacities of constituents to be better skilled,

more aware, and more involved in CBO programming. As one participant described,

constituents gain perspective when working with university service learning students. The

participant stated:

> It also helps us to provide a perspective for our clients, particularly with the youth.
> Because the youth, it gives them an opportunity [to see that] what they're doing or kind of
> the trouble that they've gotten into, doesn't define them. They're talking to people who
> are generally not that much older than them and so it almost helps them to see their future
> in a different light, in a different perspective. Because they're looking at a college student
> that's maybe two or three years older than them and that's a pursuing a college degree.
> And it begins to help them understand that they can do it too (CBO3).

Young people served by CBOs can expand their self-concept and envision a positive future under the mentorship of university students. Increasing the attributes and relationships of constituents occurs as a result of partnerships between universities and CBOs.

The third individual-level *Enhancing Capacity* theme, *University Student-related Factors,* refers to positive capacity effects related to the university students who engage with CBOs and their constituents. Respondents described how the partnership built the individual capacities of university students to build personal connections, gain perspective of the constituent population, and expand their experiential learning opportunities. Respondents noted that university students benefit from applying knowledge and skills to addressing community issues. As a result of partnering with CBOs, university students acquire "a good real world experience in working with organizations and their populations and trying to help them meet their program or agency goals" (CBO10, R1). University students have also continued their commitments to CBOs, augmenting their individual capacities for community engagement and professional development. As one respondent shared, "We currently have interns from DePaul University that started as volunteers. And because of their commitment to [the CBO], they were offered a position as an intern" (CBO18). Many participants expressed gratitude for the ongoing involvement of university students and graduates-turned-CBO staff members and administrators.

Within the second thematic area of *Enhancing Capacity* regarding the effects of increased capacity on the organizational level, two codes emerged from the data: *Communication* and *Organizational Resources and Practice. Communication* refers to the improved organizational systems of communication resulting from the partnership. From the partnership, respondents asserted that their CBOs enhanced their ability to share information with funders, legislators, and other stakeholders. One respondent described the positive effect on her agency, stating:

> On an organizational level, we have taken products to Springfield with us, to share them with legislators, to share them with our funders, in particular who are trying to understand our work in light of the pressure to produce outcomes from evidence-based strategies. What we recognize is that we have always worked in an evidence-based manner. Even before that terminology got framed we were doing it. What DePaul has helped us do is it's given us the products, the comfort level with the terminology to actually present our organization to our funders and to legislators in very different terms (CBO16).

University partnerships have helped to advance CBO operations regarding communication to disseminate findings and expand outreach to stakeholder groups. As one respondent noted, "We're able to get our message out to the public" (CBO14).

Organizational Resources and Practice, the second organizational-level capacity theme, refers to the improved organizational systems of leveraging new resources, data-driven practice, and outreach as a result of the partnership. As one respondent noted, service learning students helped to improve curriculum and activity resources of the CBO. According to this community partner, university students contribute new "experiences, expertise, games, activities, teaching strategies" to their service learning work (CBO15). As a result, the CBO has catalogued the information within

> A rolodex in our organization of different icebreaker activities or team-building games and those came from different staff members but also interns and college partnerships and volunteers that they do on their own. So that's another way, I think, that bringing in interns can help add to our capacity long-term (CBO15).

In this case, the rich and varied backgrounds of university students were leveraged to increase organizational resources. For community partners, enhanced capacity on the organizational level resulted from the partnership, facilitating CBOs' acquisition of new and more quality resources and practices.

Within the third thematic area of *Enhancing Capacity* regarding the effects of increased capacity on the community level, three codes emerged from the data: *Presence, Deeper Understanding*, and *Stronger Community*. *Presence*, the first community-level capacity theme,

refers to the positive community-level effects of the university's presence. One participant

described the message that university engagement sends to community members, saying:

> I do believe that it is meaningful for the area universities to be connected with organizations like ours that are investing in inner city development…let's say I'm in a meeting somewhere and somebody might ask me, are university students involved in what you do? And I can say, yes, we have a partnership with DePaul University and a partnership with UIC and a partnership with Columbia College. And I think that conveys something to the community that these schools are investing in what we're doing. So in that sense I think that's a positive statement to be able to make (CBO12).

Universities' community-focused agendas appear to have an on-the-ground impact as they

partner with CBOs to address neighborhood issues. Some respondents pointed to the indirect

effects regarding service delivery that the university presence has on the neighborhoods. As one

executive director shared:

> We're a community organization that's working in a particular community and the children we work with, they all attend schools in our community. So the services that we provide essentially help them do well in school. That's what our focus is, helping them with their homework and teaching them basic life skills...so I think if we were not there that would mean that there would be often 50 children who are not receiving services. So I think it does have an effect on the community even though we're a smaller organization. I think we still have an impact on the community and I think that is enhanced by the DePaul partnership that we have (CBO8).

In direct and indirect ways, the presence of university students, staff, and agendas carries the

potential for positive community-level effects.

The second community-level capacity theme, *Deeper Understanding*, refers to the

positive community-level effects related to increased understanding that results from the

partnership. One research partnership between DePaul University and a CBO led to the

dissemination of critical information within the neighborhood. As the CBO partner stated:

> The neighborhood stakeholders who were participating in the [neighborhood] forum or the drug and tobacco group that we had -- it gave them also a context of the situation of the presence of alcohol and drugs in the neighborhood of how youth look at it, how adults look at it. I think it was good for information for them to see how to put the problem in

proper context in [the neighborhood]. So it served as a good educational piece for our neighborhood stakeholders as well (CBO10, R2).

Due to the university partnership, community members developed knowledge and awareness of the issues facing their youth and families. Products from the partnership confirmed prevailing neighborhood attitudes, affirming and legitimizing the prevention work undertaken with community youth.

The third community-level capacity theme, *Stronger Community*, refers to the positive community-level effects associated with community relations that result from the partnership. The work of the university students extends into the community when projects strengthen relationships and partnerships among community members. In one case, a participant described how a combined service project brought neighborhood CBOs together to address the problem of barren areas. The participant shared that he connects with other neighborhood CBOs when his CBO receives multiple volunteers:

> We could actually send maybe one of our staff members over to another site because we actually have enough volunteers for that particular day or we do a combined service project such as a tree garden. We'll work with another organization. That was one way how we could actually impact the larger community because the overall plan with the tree garden, which was kind of started by a DePaul student, was for this year we were actually going to try to transplant some of the trees that were planted last year to other parts of the community. That way we can try to hopefully spread that concept of, hey, any barren area in the community doesn't have to just stay a barren area. It can actually turn into something that's beautiful (CBO5).

In this case, university service with the CBO developed into engagement with the larger community. Partnerships between universities and CBOs hold multiple benefits at the community level.

The fourth thematic area of *Enhancing Capacity* involves not enhancing capacity on any level and one theme emerged from the data; *Challenges to Capacity* refers to ways in which enhancing the CBO's capacity was inhibited. Respondents discussed the difficulties faced when

support from the university ceases. In one case, a CBO relied upon a partnership facilitated by

university students placed through a work study program. When the program reached its end,

the CBO's capacity suffered. As the respondent stated:

> I would say that we sort of planned on having that relationship with DePaul continue.
> And that was definitely something that when that program was no longer sustainable was
> really hard for us to kind of figure out…because that person was treated like a staff
> member. And how are we going to bring them on or bring on that role back in house
> that's hard to find. And that was definitely a challenge...as great...as it was, I think it was
> pretty unsustainable (CBO17).

For some CBOs, capacity increases during the partnership, but may be difficult to sustain when

the partnership ends. For other CBOs, the level of engagement from the university students is

not deep enough to warrant significant positive changes to capacity. One respondent shared that

students' involvement was marginally helpful in starting, but not necessarily completing, a

project to the CBO's desired level. The respondent noted:

> I can see why a project like that for someone who's not that familiar with the
> organization's work…it's hard to be the one who's trying to tell the organization's story
> and things like that. So I understand that there are challenges with something like that.
> But…this other volunteer, not related to DePaul, is the one who's really going to have the
> biggest impact on that project. [I: So it sounds like it was just sort of a first step in sort of
> reviewing your website and the website content.] Yeah. [I: But it sounds like the depth is
> probably going to be taken on by someone who understands the organization a bit more
> than the DePaul students who had initially contacted you folks.] Yeah (CBO1).

Partnerships between universities and CBOs face challenges to building capacity at the

individual, organizational, and community levels, including program sustainability, university

dependence, and depth of university student involvement.

Within the fifth thematic area of *Enhancing Capacity* regarding the processes and

activities associated with capacity, two themes emerged from the data: *Meetings and Trainings*

and *Partnership Logistics*. *Meetings and Trainings* refers to the in-person meetings for content-

or relationship-building purposes led by either CBO or university partners. A respondent

portrayed the university partner as a helpful resource that provides forums for meetings and

trainings to occur. She stated:

> The [university partner] has created an opportunity for us to have discussions around civic issues, community issues that really impact us and the community work. In terms of building community capacity, building relationship, understanding systems, understanding how communities can come together in order to improve and change systems, they've created that opportunity for that dialogue to take place…But I think it's even broader than that…the [university partner] has really been a resource when we just develop new concepts in terms of…carrying out our…community development, community change work, I mean, it's one we could go to, that source of knowledge or direction and for discussion (CBO4).

Through meetings and trainings, community partners are equipped with the guidance to carry out

their work more effectively. Such processes increase CBO's ability to deliver better resources.

The second code that emerged from the processes of *Enhancing Capacity* was

Partnership Logistics, which refers to the activities associated with the detailed organization,

coordination, and implementation of operating the partnership. Within this theme, three

subthemes emerged, including a) *Recruitment and Matching*, b) *Plans and Expectations-setting*,

and c) *Project Implementation*. The first subtheme, *Recruitment and Matching*, refers to the

process of securing university students to serve at the CBO for a given length of time. One

respondent described the process of recruiting volunteers for their school-based programs:

> We provide the opportunities to the [university partner] and then they work with individual professors who are looking for service opportunities for their specific class. Or the [university partner helps by] promoting the individuals who are looking for volunteer opportunities…once they select an opportunity that suits their, again, their time availability, their grade preference, and their location, then we connect the volunteer with [the CBO] program manager that is looking specifically with the school that they have chosen to work with (CBO18).

Enhancing the capacity of CBOs starts with acquiring university students whose schedules,

interests, and skill sets best fit the needs of CBOs.

The second *Partnership Logistics* subtheme, *Planning and Expectations-setting*, refers to agreeing on joint objectives of projects and partnerships between CBO and university partners. For CBO representatives, meeting face-to-face to clarify project goals with university staff members, faculty, and students at the project onset can help to actualize partnership potential regarding capacity. A respondent described the two-way vetting process,

> We came in and we met with the professor, a group of other organizations all interested in having students from this class. And it was kind of a chance for her to describe the needs of the class, what types of projects she was looking for, and then to match the needs of the course with actual organization needs. And I think that that piece was really good because…it kind of served as a vetting process for both of us. So I think that that way the professor is able to get what he or she needs out of the volunteer experience. But then we also get an opportunity to…find out what this is and what it isn't so that we're not signing up to have students that we either can't support or that we're expecting to get something out of them that they're not going to be assigned to do. I think that that was a really nice piece that I haven't had with any other university (CBO1).

CBO partners appreciate the opportunity for planning and expectations-setting. Improving CBOs' resources begins with the articulation and mutual agreement of clear plans, goals, and objectives between all parties.

The third *Partnerships Logistics* subtheme, *Project Implementation*, refers to activities associated with the actual service, research, and other capacity-building activities implemented through partnership.   Respondents described how university students work directly with staff members, constituents, and community members to enhance capacity. In one instance, a respondent asserted that university students' project-based work provides a deeper level of engagement and benefit than direct service. He stated:

> I think the project-based service learning that the students have been doing has really enhanced our organization, I think, because the nice thing about that is students come in. They're doing it for part of a class, but it's not just a set amount of hours that they're going to achieve. You know, they actually have projects along the way. So I think it increases their involvement a little bit more than just the required 20 hours that some students have to do…I think sometimes when they have more of a focus as far as achieving certain

goals it kind of enhances their performance and their experience and ours as well (CBO8).

Goal-directed and results-oriented projects are distinguished from standard service learning projects that rely upon completion of hours to measure success. CBO representatives perceive project-based learning as an opportunity to enhance the capacity of both students and CBOs. Another respondent shared a unique story about earning credentials, noting the university's values certificate and values-centered leadership program. He said:

> DePaul was able to offer that to different service site directors last year, and I completed the program… Learning some of the theories and concepts with the values-centered leadership certificate has definitely…help[ed me] do different administrator tasks at our youth center.…I'm so glad that I was able to take part in that opportunity because…the information and the concepts were very relevant to what we were doing at the youth center (CBO5).

As a result of the educational program through the university, the CBO representative built his individual administrative capacity and has applied his training to his CBO work. Such opportunities to bridge universities and communities serve to benefit the capacity of CBOs.

Increasing Efficiency

The second area of inquiry was *Increasing Efficiency*, which was defined as utilizing current resources more effectively to deliver on the CBO's promised objectives. The definition of efficiency used within the present examination is distinguished from efficiency of the partnership, used elsewhere in the extant literature. The effects of increasing efficiency will be explored at individual, organizational, and community levels. In addition, the effects of not increasing efficiency will be described. Finally, processes associated with efficiency will be shared.

Within the first thematic area of *Increasing Efficiency* regarding the effects of enhanced efficiency at the <u>individual level</u>, two themes emerged from the data: *CBO Staff-related Factors*

and *Constituent-related Factors*. *CBO Staff-related Factors* refers to positive efficiency effects

related to staff members at the CBO. In many cases, the utilization of human resources was

improved through the partnership. For example, one participant noted that the addition of

university student service learners "definitely helps morale because people don't feel

overwhelmed because they have help. That's for staff" (CBO3). Increasing staff morale leads to

accomplishing work more effectively. Another participant noted that use of university space

eases the burden of staff members:

> Instead of a staff member having to go around from place to place to place coordinating
> services and activities, they're coming to one location. Or instead of having a staff
> member coordinate volunteers going to three different [CBO locations] to facilitate the
> same activity, they're coordinating one person coming to one location to do the workshop
> once instead of trying to separate them because there's not space and capacity at one
> [CBO location] to host all the teens at the same time (CBO11).

In this case, partnership with the university allows for more efficient use of individual staff

members' resources. Ensuring best use of individuals' time and effort for facilitation,

coordination, and administration is vital to successful partnerships.

The second individual-level theme related to efficiency, *Constituent-related Factors*,

refers to positive efficiency effects related to constituents served by the CBO.   With the help of

university students, individual constituents can benefit from integrating more efficient practices

into their daily lives. One respondent described:

> A lot of youth have very bad organizational skills. And so as college students with
> different schedules and learning how to manage their classes, they've really been able to
> help many of our youth get right on track as far as this is how you study, this is when you
> study, this is how you keep your book bag organized. Even with some of our young
> adults this is how you should set up your bank account. This is how you should do this.
> Basically, on the individual level they've been a very good help on helping the individual
> lives and efficiency, especially where they may not have had anybody before tell them
> how to do something efficient (CBO5).

Young people served by CBOs and university students learn basic life skills that promote

efficiency and self-efficacy. On an individual level, constituents have benefited from

engagement with the university.

Within the second thematic area of *Increasing Efficiency* regarding the effects of

enhanced efficiency at the <u>organizational level</u>, three themes emerged from the data: *Use of*

Time, *Use of Money*, and *Effective and Organized Practices*. *Use of Time* refers to positive

efficiency effects related to organizational use of time. In organizations with limited capacity,

time-efficient projects and initiatives are critical. One respondent noted that partnership with the

university has

> Helped us [provide] more of our services to clients. A lot of our departments are…run by
> just one person. And so having some assistance has definitely given us an opportunity to
> expand in a sense that we're offering more of what we do to more people, more timely
> and definitely more effectively. Because they're able to be met sooner. And in some
> instances, better (CBO3).

Intentional use of time for organizational functioning has been bolstered by university

partnerships. As a result of partnerships, CBOs are able to utilize their existing resources of time

more effectively.

The second organizational-level *Increasing Efficiency* theme, *Use of Money*, refers to

positive efficiency effects related to organizational use of money. Aside from time, money is a

priority resource that CBOs seek to gain and conserve in the most effective manner possible.

Respondents shared the challenges that their CBOs face when limited resources dictate quality of

programs and services. Often, staffing needs are sacrificed for the sake of saving money. As

one respondent stated:

> Surely the partnership with [the university partner] helped us…because we didn't need to
> hire extra technology people to come in, which would have cost us thousands of dollars at
> that point in our program to build this website. So I think it certainly enhanced the

organization by allowing us to have these pro bono services enhance the program (CBO7).

The provision of free services from the university alleviates the financial burden that many

CBOs face. CBOs rely heavily on a strong volunteer base to accomplish everyday tasks and

special projects. Universities equip CBOs with in-kind donations and human resources to

address the limited financial resources CBOs possess.

The third organizational-level theme related to efficiency, *Effective and Organized*

Practices, refers to positive efficiency effects related to organizational practices. Some

respondents described the development and institutionalization of structured models to increase

orderliness. In one case, a participant shared that her CBO has "tried to duplicate that [model]

even after our partnership" (CBO10, R1). Another participant stated that a student who managed

the paperwork for the CBO's recruitment activities added efficiency to the CBO:

> We got 300 applications and I didn't know what to do with them. And having her [student] come in and process them and know what was going on and know where they were kept and know what was what added greatly to our ability to do a good job and just made the process so much more efficient. So when a student would walk in the door, we knew how to find their name in the database because it was in a database...and that definitely organizationally made us more efficient in that program (CBO15).

By initiating new systems and approaches to organizations, university students have increased

organizational efficiency. Partnerships can help to facilitate improved ways of operating so that

the CBO can meet its needs and serve its constituents. Capitalizing on university students' skills,

CBOs can upgrade organizational practices to deliver services better and faster. One respondent

praised a student placed at her organization, saying:

> The particular individual we were working with is very great, kind of organizational, linear thinker so that was really great to have somebody kind of be like we could run the pantry in this way and have things kind of set up to this is the fastest way and nobody's working harder than they need to. So that sort of internally affected the way the actual pantry is done (CBO17).

In this case, the student was able to objectively assess the situation and offer advice for how to improve the system's operations. Assistance from university students allows CBOs to adopt more efficient and organized practices for programming and operations.

Within the third thematic area of *Increasing Efficiency* regarding positive effects at the community level, two themes emerged from the data: *CBO Service Delivery* and *Youth Outreach*. *CBO Service Delivery,* the first community-level *Increasing Efficiency* theme, refers to positive efficiency effects related to services delivered by the CBO to the community. A respondent described the relationship that her CBO has with the university, stating,

> We're able to serve, as I said before. If we didn't have [the partnership], we wouldn't be able to carry on. So that's the biggest thing. It certainly is with our afterschool program. And we have said that…if we don't have enough volunteers, we can't operate because we do not have finances that would allow us to pay our students to come (CBO13).

This respondent is a volunteer, herself, and she recognizes the vital role that non-paid staff members and university service learning students play in maintaining programs. Arguably, there might be some danger in creating a model in which CBOs are dependent on universities for support. However, in most cases, community-university partnerships promote sustainability of programs and services that, in turn, benefit constituents within the community.

The second community-level *Increasing Efficiency* theme, *Youth Outreach*, refers to positive efficiency effects related to youth outreach facilitated by the CBO to the community. Respondents described the relationship between individual-, organizational-, and community-level effects of efficiency. One participant noted,

> These children getting exposure to people from DePaul…they're able to do their homework better, they're able to have an adult sit down and read with them for a day, which many of them lack and they don't get that. So if you're helping children you're having a direct effect or impact on the community. And increasing that efficiency just means that you can reach more children at a deeper level (CBO8).

According to CBO representatives, young people who receive services through the CBO improve their individual efficiency practices, thereby improving community-level outcomes. With implications for the larger community, the quality of youth outreach can continue as a result of CBOs' partnerships with universities.

Increasing Efficiency's fourth thematic area involves not increasing efficiency at any level and one theme emerged from the data; *Challenges to Increasing Efficiency* refers to ways in which increasing the CBO's efficiency was inhibited. A number of community partners experienced difficulties regarding recruitment of service learning students; it is inefficient for CBO representatives to leave their agencies and their work to make in-person on-campus visits to secure volunteers. One respondent shared that she has had to close the program down when she attends university-based student recruitment activities since her CBO is severely under-staffed. For other community partners, taking on one or more service learning students customarily impedes organizational functioning in terms of staff time and effort. As a respondent poignantly noted:

> At the beginning, it always hurts efficiency. I mean, when an intern comes in, very rarely do they come in and add efficiency immediately, for us at least. I think that partially because we work really hard to make sure that interns have a really high quality experience that involves youth work and around young people…And the higher level subjects take a lot more time and a lot more guidance and a lot more experience. And so…an intern isn't going to be able to come on their first day and write a curriculum, for example, or do a lesson plan or run a workshop. They're going to need a ton of guidance and a ton of facilitation, a ton of help to do that. And we try not to give them the grunt work right away, but we could give them filing on day one and they can add efficiency that way, but we just choose not to do that (CBO15).

Community partners wish to provide as meaningful an experience as possible for university students, while recognizing the individual limitations of time and skill that volunteers may possess. To balance what is possible given CBOs' own capabilities, efficiency often suffers. CBO representatives also face extra paperwork and bureaucratic issues on account of partnering

with universities. One respondent expressed frustration, asserting that such formalities are

needless and should be lightened:

> There are those procedural issues that are taking place…I think that slow down, the
> paperwork…that was problematic for us I think in this past year, just trying to get our
> paperwork together and DePaul's different departments not having their paperwork
> together. But I think that's a chronic problem that many institutions are facing, just
> figuring out how to do all of that in a less bureaucratic way. [I: No kidding. That
> bureaucracy is a necessary evil sometimes.]…I really don't believe it's necessary to tell
> you the truth. I mean, people claim that it is, but I honestly don't feel that it is that
> necessary…some of it could be alleviated but it's not my place (CBO5).

In some cases, the paperwork gets in the way of the actual work. As the same respondent shared,

"The more students I have, the more paperwork I have. But I wouldn't necessarily put that as a

negative because the positive far outweighs that" (CBO5). CBO representatives may encounter

challenges to efficiency on account of managing university students as well as dealing with

university bureaucracy. However, most respondents emphasized that the benefits of the

partnership offset the costs.

The fifth thematic area of *Increasing Efficiency* involves processes associated with

efficiency. Two themes emerged from the data: *CBO-driven Logistics* and *University Partner-*

driven Operations Improvement. The first theme associated with efficiency processes, *CBO-*

driven Logistics, refers to the activities directed by CBO representatives that occur throughout

the course of university partnership to drive efficiency. Within this theme, four subthemes

emerged, including a) *Planning*, b) *Orientation and Training*, c) *Coordination*, and d)

Assessment and Evaluation.

The first *CBO-driven Logistics* subtheme is *Planning*, which refers to the front-loaded

work handled by CBO representatives to promote efficiency through university partnerships. As

mentioned within the section on *Challenges to Increasing Efficiency*, community partners "try to

come up with projects that have a combination of increasing our efficiency but also being a good

learning experience for the student" (CBO15). To ensure mutual benefits to CBO efficiency and

student learning, CBO representatives invest time and energy in creating clear, feasible, and

useful projects. Such plans must be realistic to maximize strengths and minimize harm, as one

respondent noted:

> The level of work I have [university students] doing is at the bottom. Like this is work that is important, but if they mess it up I won't get in trouble. And the organization won't fail or close the next day if they don't do it right. There's nothing really negative to it because of the types of work I have them doing is important work, but it's not do-or-die type work (CBO14).

The process of planning is necessary not only to ensure a worthwhile project for all parties

involved, but also to avoid negative consequences. For CBO representatives, identifying

organizational needs and the best fit for service learning students occurs at the onset of

partnership projects.

The second *CBO-driven Logistics* subtheme is *Orientation and Training*, which refers to

on-site orientation and training provided to university students to prepare them for community

engagement. CBO representatives acknowledge that the quality of service rendered is only as

good as the person rendering the service. University students bring their varying levels of

personal and professional skills to partnerships, but must be equipped for specific project work

with CBOs and their constituents. One respondent stated that his CBO is in the process of

enriching the current volunteer training and development protocol in place. He pointed out that:

> I know they only have a few hours to come in and work at the community center. And so I'm trying personally to do a better job developing them, preparing them and training them so that they have the best experience working with the children (CBO8).

Strong on-site orientation and training programs not only serve to increase service quality, but

also to increase the confidence of university students in addressing community needs. Through

experiential training and learning within CBOs and neighborhoods, university students acquire

unique skills and extend classroom concepts to the real world.

Coordination, the third CBO-driven Logistics subtheme, refers to the on-site supervision

facilitated by CBO representatives to direct university students during partnership activities.

Respondents shared that while university students are engaged in community-based service,

research, and engagement, site representatives are charged with monitoring the work throughout

the course of the project. Through successful coordination, the efficiency of partnership

activities can be ensured. One respondent attributed the ease of coordination and increase of

efficiency to the use of the university partner's space, saying:

> A lot of the work that we do here in this department revolves around coordinating of
> services and activities and the volunteers. This program is very much volunteer-driven.
> And so we have over 100 volunteers who are helping to facilitate what we do. And so
> the process of coordinating where they need to be at what time and all that kind of stuff
> really has been much easier on the staff, when they know that they're able to send the
> volunteers to a place that's, even for them, easy to get to (CBO11).

Juggling multiple factors including individuals' schedules takes expert coordination so that

project objectives are met despite logistical challenges. The extent to which a project promotes

efficiency for CBOs hinges upon a coordination system that works for community partners and

university partners alike.

Assessment and Evaluation, the fourth and final CBO-driven Logistics subtheme, refers

to activities undertaken by CBO representatives to examine the partnership with the goal of

informing and improving operations. Respondents described their approaches to capturing

perspectives from university students at the completion of their CBO engagement. As one

participant stated:

> Our biggest process would be the assessment in terms of evaluating efficiency. So even
> through partnerships with our DePaul partners, as an organization, we always go through

and do an assessment, formal or informal, of what seemed to work, what didn't seem to work, and then how we can best improve upon that (CBO19).

CBO representatives value the feedback provided by service learning students, staff members, and other university partners. After observing and experiencing CBO operations over the course of the project, university partners can share important insights that lead to implementing more efficient practices, systems, and partnerships.

The second theme associated with efficiency processes, *University Partner-driven Operations Improvement* refers to the efficiency-related activities directed by partnering university staff members, faculty, and students intended to optimize the performance of CBOs. Contributions from university partners have helped CBOs reflect upon their work, reframe it, and explore ways in which system improvements could produce greater efficiency. In one particular case, a university student employed her research and evaluation skills to strengthen the CBO's existing evaluation system. The respondent expressed satisfaction over the operations improvement, stating:

> This quarter, we actually have a service learner who does evaluations, spreadsheets, quantitative data, qualitative data, and she's coming in to help us set up that evaluation piece. So she's going to spend her six weeks helping with the whole evaluation tool. [I: Wow. So that seems like it definitely will help with efficiency.] Yes. It does. Because now she is putting together a spreadsheet and an Access database. And so now all we need is someone to input the data (CBO2).

When a good fit occurs between organizational needs and university students' skill sets, partnerships cultivate operations improvement for CBOs. University students draw upon their experiences to introduce innovative methods for bringing about organizational efficiency. To address limited technological resources at one CBO, a university student demonstrated how utilizing the website FreeRice.com can serve an educational yet time-efficient purpose:

> How can we have a way of having students complete something that's academic-based but not have them on the computer for such a long time in order to create efficiency for

other students to get on the computer and do the same task. And one of the DePaul students basically added us to that website and helped us fine-tune it to the point where we can get students in and out of the computer lab in under five minutes...because we only have about 14 computers active (CBO5).

Establishing such functional improvements can expedite organizational processes and alleviate work for CBO representatives, especially those who share that "a slow day for our youth center is 100 kids" (CBO5). Partnerships with universities can support CBOs in their pursuit of increased organizational efficiency.

Empowering Constituents

The third area of inquiry was *Empowering Constituents*, which was defined as empowering CBOs' constituents so that they are better skilled, informed, and organized to achieve the goals they determine for themselves. The effects of improving the ability to empower constituents will be explored at individual, organizational, and community levels. In addition, the effects of not improving the ability to empower constituents will be described. Finally, processes associated with empowering constituents will be shared.

Within the first thematic area of *Empowering Constituents* regarding positive effects at the individual level, one theme emerged from the data. *Constituent-related Factors* refers to positive effects of individual-level empowerment related to constituents served by the CBO. For respondents whose youth-serving organizations aim to instill in their constituents a sense of empowerment with regard to self-determination and self-advocacy, success occurs when university partnerships contribute to constituents' personal development. For the following participant, attainment of empowerment relies upon the relationship between university students and youth constituents. The CBO representative stated:

> I think that that happens based on particular interns. So if you have an intern who can build a really strong relationship with the student that they're working with…I think they can definitely provide a set of skills and empowerment, but I think it's really on a case by

case basis. So I think it's individual interns empowering individual students is generally how it works based on their relationship with them and belief in them, with tutoring, stuff like that (CBO15).

Many respondents emphasized the valuable contributions that university student mentors can make in young people's lives, including building self-esteem, improving academic performance, and facilitating cultural exchanges. Most consistently, CBO representatives noted the impact on youth constituents' motivations to graduate from high school and to envision attending college. A respondent described the positive influence that university students have on young people and their educational goals:

> In our afterschool program, we are trying our best to encourage [youth]…to graduate from 8th grade, go into high school, and persevere in high school. So those students who come from DePaul…they certainly are role models for the students [at the CBO]. They get to see somebody who's still going to school. And for many of our children, if they get out of high school, they may be the first one in their family to graduate from high school. …it helps our students see…young people, not just the older ones who are like their parents who are always saying study or do this or do that. They get it from the students who come from DePaul. So it's been an invaluable relationship as far as we're concerned (CBO13).

Meeting and interacting with university students encourages youth constituents to perceive academic pursuits as not only meaningful, but ultimately possible. Through effectual and consistent mentorship, constituents' sense of empowerment can be nurtured and can underpin goal attainment.

Although this thematic area within *Empowering Constituents* focused on the individual effects on youth constituents served by CBOs, it must be noted that respondents expanded the definition to include effects on CBO staff members and university students. One CBO representative experienced professional growth as a result of the partnership, stating that she developed leadership abilities in voicing the concerns of community residents and stakeholders. Another respondent shared that exposure to the university through campus tours, workshops, and

service learning projects has "motivated me to go back [to school and get] my master's and potentially my Ph.D." (CBO2). After partnering with universities, CBO staff members feel inspired to actualize their potential and to become leaders in their agencies and within the communities they serve. Respondents also considered the empowerment effects on university students. One respondent shared that he has extended career guidance and vocational advice to university students who engage with his organization. Such guidance counseling has resulted in some students changing their majors and reevaluating their life plans. Within partnership, empowerment appears to develop for CBO staff members and university students as it does for CBOs' youth constituents.

Within the second *Empowering Constituents* thematic area regarding the effects of improved ability to empower constituents at the <u>organizational level</u>, two themes emerged from the data: *Meeting Needs* and *Self-reliant Practices*. *Meeting Needs*, the first organizational-level *Empowering Constituents* theme, refers to positive organizational empowerment effects related to a CBO's ability to meet needs. Respondents described how partnering with universities helped CBOs achieve mission-oriented goals, especially those directed toward meeting the practical, urgent, and diverse needs of constituents. One CBO convenes forum-style neighborhood events to publicly address ways in which young women of color can actualize their leadership potential. On an organizational level, the university partnership assisted with

> Being able to get the message out about our particular event…that…so happened to be about empowerment through leadership, entrepreneurism, activism, and development. So them being able to help us facilitate the dissemination of the information from that particular event I think really took it to a different level. Really took it to a different level for us...I think that's been the biggest help is just being a physical body that we've shared this knowledge with to help us share with other people (CBO19).

The steady and consistent involvement of university partners has sustained CBOs' ability to meet the needs of their constituents. Respondents shared that their CBOs are better equipped to

deliver quality programs. As a result of partnership with universities, CBOs improve their ability to empower constituents through service delivery and neighborhood outreach.

The second organizational-level theme associated with *Empowering Constituents*, *Self-reliant Practices*, refers to positive organizational empowerment effects related building CBOs' independence and self-efficacy. As noted earlier, partnerships between universities and CBOs run the danger of employing a dependence model, particularly if partnerships dissolve after project-based work is completed. Some respondents commended their university partners for instilling self-reliant practices within CBOs. In the spirit of empowerment, such practices promote a CBO's ability to achieve the goals it determines for itself. As noted by a community partner involved in an evaluation project with the university:

> I'm sensing that some of our [organizational] affiliates are developing a straight line, a kind of a linear understanding of what risk factors they're dealing with and what protective factors they're dealing with in order to achieve certain goals, whether it be antiviolence or whatever. But I think that now they have frameworks that allow them to better understand how that work can be aligned with evidence-based practice, with research. And I think it's invited them into the game in a kind of interesting way (CBO16).

Expanding opportunities for CBOs and their staff members to direct activities typically housed within universities naturally changes the power dynamics associated with ownership, authorship, and perceived expertise. University staff members, faculty, and students committed to organizational empowerment aim to foster CBO's institutional confidence to conduct research, evaluation, and engagement work independently from their university partners.

Within the third *Empowering Constituents* thematic area regarding the effects of improved ability to empower constituents at the community level, two themes emerged from the data: *Relational Development* and *Community Support and Resources*. The first community-level *Empowering Constituents* theme, *Relational Development*, refers to positive community

empowerment effects associated with building relationships among community members and

community entities. Through neighborhood outreach activities, university students directly

connect with community youth and families. As one respondent described:

> [University students are] going out there and doing the grassroots outreach that we do, which involves us taking a team of our volunteers out with our director and talking to young people on the south or west side. That means they're having individual interaction with young people and families. And so there's no way that that can't be having an impact on the constituents (CBO12).

Developing relationships with CBOs' constituents serves to build the relational capacity between

CBOs and entire community areas. It must be noted that although CBOs are often perceived as

direct representatives of community residents, it is not uncommon for CBOs to experience a

profound disconnect from the populations they are intended to serve. In addition, collaboration

between CBOs can be hindered by competition for limited resources within a shared territory.

Therefore, relational development within community areas is promising and can be advanced by

partnership initiatives. As described by one respondent, connections can be forged between

other neighborhood organizations as a result of university partnerships:

> Many of the organizations in the community are not aware that they can partner with different universities. And so by just finding out that we have this type of partnership, many cases they can get the needed assistance…just by finding out that we have it. So I think in a round-about way, this has been able to help impact other organizations. So we know at least two other organizations that have partnered up with DePaul as well as other local universities because of us (CBO5).

CBOs with existing university relationships can promote such opportunities to other

neighborhood organizations. There is potential for expanded place-based initiatives and projects

through raising awareness of collaborative ventures between universities and CBOs.

Community Support and Resources is the second community-level *Empowering*

Constituents theme and refers to positive community empowerment effects associated with the

facilitation of services, sharing of resources, and achievement of goals among community

members. One respondent noted that the data-driven information produced by the university

partnership confirmed and legitimized the experiences of neighborhood stakeholders surrounding

the issue of underage substance use. In this project, the partnership products depicting

community members' stories "brought some type of empowerment or hope that the little things

that I can do or this little power that I may have could help with this process and lead to a

positive achieved goal" for neighborhood stakeholders as a whole (CBO10, R1). Within another

CBO, university students worked to increase participation from constituents' parents and

families through:

> A cultural celebration. And I think that support for the community empowers them, because I think sometimes for people who move to a new country…it's kind of a nice way to preserve their cultural values. And so the DePaul students held this family event and we had a very good showing and I think it was a good experience for everyone involved. So I think that's a form of empowerment...it's a newer thing that we're starting to do. Our parental involvement was lower, which is something we're trying to build up. And so this just helped…the DePaul students came in and they planned everything and they took the lead on it…when people can come in and plan these family events it just helps the whole community center, it helps the whole community (CBO8).

The relational element cannot be denied in this instance and illustrates that social connections

facilitate empowering effects at the community level. Partnerships between CBOs and

universities can have positive influences on the extent to which communities are served,

serviced, and strengthened.

The fourth *Empowering Constituents* thematic area involves not improving the ability to

empower constituents on any level. One theme emerged from the data, *Challenges to*

Empowering Constituents, which refers to ways in which the CBO's ability to empower

constituents was not improved. Some of these challenges occur on a theoretical level. For

example, one participant pointed to a disconnect between the university students' and CBOs'

understanding of empowerment. When university students perceive constituents as academically

weak, community partners struggle to counter misperceptions and show that empowerment is possible, especially with young people serviced by the CBO. *Challenges to Empowering Constituents* also occur on an interpersonal level. One participant shared nuances in delineating relationships between DePaul service learning students and young people served by the CBO. According to this respondent, in rare instances,

> Students from DePaul identify with our students too much. And because they've had the same experiences…they cannot…create that boundary to help them understand that there's another perspective…and sometimes in those instances, we have to reel [university] students in or even ask students to find another placement. Because they identify too much and it's distracting for [our] students in terms of them being successful in their completion of the GED or just getting their…work or testing done (CBO3).

The lack of boundaries between university students and constituents can cause difficulty in achieving goals and actualizing constituents' potential. Interpersonal challenges can limit a CBO's ability to empower constituents. Insufficient training and ineffective approaches to engagement also restricts university students' positive impacts on populations served by CBOs. Within a partnership intended to address the educational goals of English language learners, the CBO representative questioned the techniques employed by the service learning students:

> The [university program] was…designed with an idea of popular education in mind and all the curriculum that was developed tried to broach issues of media and different forms of dominance and oppression, but I'm not sure that it's necessarily the most appropriate form to really delve deeply into those issues. I mean, in some ways I think they had some interesting conversations because of it…I just don't know if it really had much impact on [constituents'] critical thinking or critical analysis (CBO9).

Good intentions aside, suitable and relevant approaches to engagement precede the attainment of partnership outcomes. In some instances, empowering constituents was not an articulated goal of the partnership. A respondent stated:

> I would say that having support from DePaul has helped make that happen…as much as an intern can. I don't know…how much interaction actually occurred between my intern [and clients] that…led to finding a job or moving into a subsidized apartment from their…market rate apartment. But I think that we did not have that position interacting

with clients in that way. It was more of the logistical behind the food pantry and the
engaging of clients in sort of a welcoming, kind of hostess role (CBO17).

Acknowledging the limitations of partnership, respondents noted that the objectives of certain

projects are not aligned with an agenda to empower constituents. The question of relevance was

common across responses associated with partnership challenges.

Within the fifth *Empowering Constituents* thematic area regarding the processes

associated with the ability to empower constituents, two themes emerged from the data: *Meetings*

and Trainings and *Service and Community Engagement*. *Meetings and Trainings*, the first

processes theme associated with *Empowering Constituents*, refers to in-person meetings for

content- or relationship-building purposes led by either CBO or university partners. Such

meetings focus on improving the CBO's ability to empower constituents. One participant

praised the university partner's approach to empowering constituents within trainings, saying:

> The beauty of [the university staff member's] training and his philosophy…is looking at
> the potential of community residents and their ability to work to make change…when we
> speak about this issue of empowerment, I mean, it takes a lot of educating and un-
> learning what people are getting from the media and other places or so, what is happening
> in their neighborhoods and communities. And just connecting with your own self, your
> own history, your own knowledge, your own community's knowledge…the workshops
> that have taken place, the meetings…[have] helped us a lot in terms of creating a space
> and validating…what we've been thinking…around…different policy issues (CBO4).

Rooting meetings and trainings within an asset-based community development approach upholds

each community member's inherent capacities and aptitude for self-determination. Such an

approach dispels myths that distressed communities only possess deficits. Meetings and

trainings can raise consciousness regarding constituents' potential for empowerment.

The second processes theme associated with *Empowering Constituents* is *Service and*

Community Engagement and refers to the partnership activities comprising community service,

community engagement, and community-based research associated with the empowerment of

constituents. Respondents described the varied activities in which university partners directly

interacted with constituents to influence their empowerment. One participant noted how

partnership through a university-wide service day

> Speaks both to our empowering people in our agency and also the community -- we're
> going to do a park cleanup. So I think that empowers the community by keeping it
> beautiful and keeping it clean… I think that DePaul does a great job with the service
> learning aspect…that is embedded in the community…they're bringing that to us…that's
> again, something that I may not have been able to plan without the support of DePaul and
> the students at DePaul (CBO8).

University involvement extends beyond one-on-one direct service within CBOs to affect

community-wide relationships. This particular service activity has potential to influence the

entire neighborhood in its reach. *Service and Engagement* also manifests within research

activities associated with community-university partnerships. A CBO representative asserted

that focus group processes facilitated by university partners:

> Helped people tell their story. And even the fact that people were asking questions
> regarding their attitudes the drug and alcohol problem in…their neighborhood, that's
> empowering. So the fact that those forums were taking place and that the focus groups
> were structured and highly efficient in the sense that it didn't take up anyone's time in a
> negative way, and that there was a result afterwards. I think that was empowering
> (CBO10, R2).

Amplifying the voices of community stakeholders in issues that directly affect their families and

neighbors can occur through meaningful partnerships between CBOs and universities. Notably,

successful partnerships serve to empower constituents only if and when the dignity of

community members is upheld.

Altering Policies or Structures

The fourth area of inquiry was *Altering Policies or Structures*, which was defined as

changing structures, institutions, or power relations to improve the lives of a defined population.

The effects of improving the ability to alter policies or structures will be explored at individual,

organizational, and community levels. In addition, the effects of not improving the ability to

alter policies or structures will be described. Finally, processes associated with altering policies

or structures will be shared.

Within the first *Altering Policies or Structures* thematic area regarding improved effects

at the individual level, one theme emerged from the data. *Change in Perspective* refers to

individual university partners, CBO partners, and constituents modifying their previously held

perceptions of people, neighborhoods, or issues to fit new experiences. Heightened awareness of

social issues can change university students' perspectives. One participant noted that some

university students are resistant to traveling to unfamiliar neighborhoods due to perceived threats

and dangers. To address these fears, CBO representatives formally and informally introduce

university students to people living within the community and the issues that they face.

Specifically, engaging with neighborhood young people helps to dispel university students'

preconceived notions based on racial and class-based stereotypes. As the respondent shared:

> As they get a chance to come by and interact with the kids, whatever fears or
> misunderstandings that they may have had, eventually they…learn that the kids are just
> like other kids instead of what negative information they may see in the news or
> newspaper. And so I think once they complete their service hours, they can use that
> perspective hopefully to enlighten someone else or perhaps maybe to help change ideas
> and help change some policies. But many cases the students are definitely changed after
> they complete the service hours (CBO5).

Altering broad social policies begins with changing individually held stereotypes about

populations. Another participant whose organization works with both young people and with

people who have been involved in the criminal justice system noted the impact of community

engagement on the service learning students:

> The students themselves are getting exposed to a population that they may have
> preconceived notions about…it's not always about somebody being "bad." It's just that
> they've had bad experiences and bad exposure and bad environment and as a result, these
> things have happened to them. But they also get to see that these people want to turn

their lives around. It's not necessarily this horrible picture that we tend to see in the media and the world about these so-called criminals. So I think it helps them to understand that they're people. And in many instances, people that have made mistakes and really want to do something different with their lives. So it changes their perspective which I think is great (CBO3).

The learning that occurs through dialogue and interaction between university students and constituents can be profound for all parties involved. Critical analysis also takes place between university students and CBO staff members. A respondent described how service learning students initiated discussion around organizational and community-level issues:

Our interns…questioning…the history…made us aware of that...when you have somebody who's not from Chicago who comes to your organization and they kind of ask a bunch of questions and they want to know why things are the way they are, that… gets the staff to think of why are things the way they are and why can't we change that too...it might just be me. I don't know if that's the whole culture of the organization, but yes. I'm trying (CBO17).

CBO staff members gain a new perspective when examining their organization through the eyes of outsider students. University students are also involved in supporting constituents as they change their perspective and become better equipped to advocate for change:

We're trying to teach [young people] how to make long-term sustainable change in their schools and communities either through partnership with the principal, working with the head of Chicago Public Schools, working with the mayor, working with elected officials. And so I think that [university] interns, just like any other staff members…are integral to that. So supporting students [served by the CBO] in that process, helping them learn how to do things, helping them prepare research, stuff like that…I think that any intern, any staff member is going to be a part of that process (CBO15).

This CBO fulfills specific policy objectives through their youth programming. Service learning students assist in preparing young people to advocate for improved educational policies. On an individual level, university students, CBO staff members, and constituents have shifted their understanding of issues and populations as a result of the community-university partnership.

Within the second *Altering Policies or Structures* thematic area regarding positive effects at the <u>organizational level</u>, two themes emerged from the data: *Advocacy for Constituents* and

Advocacy for Policy Change. The first organizational-level theme associated with *Altering*

Policies or Structures is *Advocacy for Constituents* and refers to positive organizational effects

related to serving constituents' needs and interests, particularly those associated with external

social policies and structures. In partnership with universities, CBOs have worked to advocate

on behalf of the populations they serve. One respondent asserted that:

> As a community center we essentially advocate for children. So we try to work with these children, help them…but I think some schools, they do not have the supports that they need to help these children learn and develop…we're not getting petitions signed and stuff, but that's something that we're working to change by offering the supports that are not available…we're trying to change the structure of it a little bit. And so I think DePaul's partnership enhances that…there are…so many services that they provide for us or help us provide that they are helping us change the structure…there are a lot of children in our community who don't have the supports that they require in order to succeed. So we're going to have to change the structure a little bit to change that (CBO8).

Although the CBO does not specialize in policy advocacy activities, the respondent pointed out

that representing the interests of constituents while working for structural change carries the

potential for positive gains. Addressing educational gaps through both direct service and

advocacy allows for multi-level approaches to complex social issues.

The second organizational-level theme associated with *Altering Policies or Structures*,

Advocacy for Policy Change, refers to positive organizational effects related to improved ability

to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions on community/neighborhood,

citywide, and statewide levels. As a result of the partnership, one CBO enhanced its ability to

> Spread our message to other legislators, congressmen about what we were doing in the community as a result of our partnership…So once they heard…an overview of our partnership and what we had done, they were really impressed that a community-based organization would really try to build this initiative. And a lot of them would tell us, you're really supporting the work that I've been advocating for in Congress for so many years. And if you guys continue this, I can continue my fight and possibly help you…get more funding in this prevention…And so we were encouraged to …continue our community level efforts…because they can move up the city level and also the state level to try to change policies and procedures [to] protect our kids (CBO10, R1).

In this instance, the CBO recognized the importance of "connecting the dots" and communicating about the critical role that prevention plays in young people's lives to elected officials. Since the CBO and its fellow coalition members endorsed an advocacy agenda, this community partner specifically sought to alter larger policies at the citywide and statewide levels. Another CBO actively engaged in policy advocacy has strengthened its organizational commitment to democratic principles. Aiming to alter structures to account for power inherent within communities, the respondent noted that in collaboration with the university, her CBO is

> Bringing people back to the basics of understanding that power happens at the grassroots level. And we do recognize that the pendulum has swung from power to the people to power to professionals. We're swinging it back, arming grassroots folks with the language and the understanding that professionals have, the researchers and so forth and we're professionalizing them as practitioners, essentially. And I think this relationship with our evaluators, with the [university partner] has moved us in the direction of professionalizing the grassroots folks so that they can articulate how they are changing community from the bottom up (CBO16).

Giving voice to the ways in which grassroots community members are becoming leaders and advocates, the CBO in partnership with the university influences public policy and resource allocation decisions. Altering power dynamics affects how solutions to social issues are devised and carried out, especially as local approaches are weighed against broad governmental methods.

Within the third *Altering Policies or Structures* thematic area regarding positive effects at the community level, one theme emerged from the data; *Change in Practice* refers to positive community-level effects related to improved practices and activities from relevant structural change. As a result of partnership with universities, CBOs reported that institutional and social practices within schools, organizations, and neighborhoods were changed for the better. One respondent noted that the community's norms surrounding liquor stores and their products were challenged and modified through partnership activities. The respondent stated:

> At the street level in [the neighborhood area], I think some of the stores over there diversify their product. That goes a long way…in a small way, it helped alter some of the street norms in [the community]. And it's a neighborhood that has a lot of assets, but [has] a lot of challenges. And we address a little bit of those challenges. So that was a positive effect of the program (CBO10, R2).

The partnership served to inform community members of the prevalence of alcohol sold within the neighborhood. Even liquor store owners sought to be a part of the structural change initiatives spearheaded by concerned community members.

The fourth *Altering Policies or Structures* thematic area involves not improving the ability to alter policies or structures at any level. One theme emerged from the data; *Beyond Scope of Partnership* refers to ways in which improving the CBO's ability to alter policies or structures was not relevant to the goals of the partnership or the CBO. Respondents noted that the nature of the partnership was such that altering policies or structures was not an intended outcome. For one respondent:

> Our service learning students focus on administrative, background, clerical type work. So it's more of a project by project [basis], and they get it done. And it's a help to us because we don't have the manpower to really get it done ourselves…our service learning students, since they're not here consistently enough, would not be involved in creating policies or structures…they're only here 20 hours over the course of 10 weeks, and then we might get a new set. So even if we were on that level, that we would allow them to be involved in the process, we wouldn't because of the fact that they're not here (CBO14).

Other participants shared that their CBOs have not historically taken an advocacy role in their work or within the communities they serve. Altering policies or structures was not a feasible goal for a number of respondents. In many cases, the ability of the partnership to address large-scale policy and structural change objectives was a moot issue.

The fifth *Altering Policies or Structures* thematic area involves the processes and activities that influence the ability to alter policies or structures. Two themes emerged from the data: *Applied Research* and *University Student Development*. *Applied Research*, the first

Altering Policies or Structures processes theme, refers to the research activities that serve to validate and ground CBOs' work to effect systemic and structural community change. Respondents spoke to developing and improving resources for constituents' advocacy purposes, disseminating research findings to community stakeholders, and conducting community-based research to bring about positive structural change. One participant shared:

> We're working towards making a change to the structure in the community on that end, because with the support of the community needs assessment that's done by the DePaul students we're looking to provide programs for older youth in the community. So we're trying to change the structure there…we're going to have focus groups with parents led by the DePaul students. And ultimately, the goal is to be able to offer programs for older youth. So I haven't witnessed any changes yet. All the groundwork is being laid (CBO8).

Achieving structural change through partnership is a work in progress, informed by research processes. Ultimately, research for applied purposes carries real world significance in its potential impact on the lives of constituents, particularly young people and their families.

The third and final *Altering Policies or Structures* processes theme, *University Student Development*, refers to orienting students to the surrounding political context and engaging students in critical social analysis regarding altering policies or structures. To understand constituents, university students must first understand the various systems-level factors that influence their social, economic, and educational development. One CBO seeks to sensitize service learning students to the political context of the educational system. The respondent said that her CBO strives to ensure that students

> Understand the politics of the situation and that you can't always change things. Sometimes, I think, we would like to change things that we believe in, but politically we can't because we're in a school, we're in a CPS, we're working with the city of Chicago. So again, just kind of making sure interns are aware of the politics of the situation before we advocate for different policy changes (CBO15).

Critically assessing situations and the ways in which systems operate leads to more mature

thinking about problems facing young people. Moreover, critical analysis about systems has an

impact on how university students become long-term advocates for social change. As they learn

more about how policy level changes occur, they might become more likely to become involved

in such work. Through reflection and dialogue, university students also humanize social issues

and gain empathy for certain populations. One respondent has challenged the stereotypes of

ethnic-racial minority groups through conversations with the university students placed at her

CBO. She stated:

> We talk about the myths that you hear all the time about people. They all crowd into one apartment. How come this?...No. It's not because they don't have to pay the rent, it's because they can't afford…what it costs to live in our neighborhood…You look around and see. You don't know what these kids are going through. You don't know how many of them are coming from families that are undocumented and what the trauma they're experiencing in their lives. So why [young people served by the CBO] don't pay attention or why aren't they getting some of this work done. If they're worried about whether or not their mother or father is going to be…there when they get home at nighttime. So it's all worth the constant thread of gains…So when [university students] come out to our neighborhoods, I think that's one of the big things…if they open their eyes to a reality that's more prevalent than the reality that they're in (CBO13).

Leading university students through critical social analysis processes allows for making meaning

and sense of community-based experiential learning. The respondent later goes on to say, "I

think probably the reflection that the students do back…in their classes…because they're

supposed to be bringing stuff back from where they are has had some influence on them"

(CBO13). Praxis, or theory in practice, is facilitated by deep reflection to connect classroom

principles with real world experiences, ultimately to achieve key learning outcomes.

Perceptions of the Ideal Partnership

The fifth area of inquiry was *Perceptions of the Ideal Partnership*, which was defined as

ways in which respondents envisioned an ideal community-university partnership. Two thematic

areas will be examined: *Characteristics of the Ideal Partnership* and *Structure of the Ideal Partnership*. Within the first thematic area of *Characteristics of the Ideal Partnership* regarding characteristics of the ideal partnership, seven themes emerged from the data: (1) *Reciprocity and Meaningful Exchange of Resources*, (2) *Expansion of Opportunities for Engagement and Access*, (3) *Individual Student Factors*, (4) *Effective Support through On-Campus Liaison*, (5) *Clarity of Goals and Plan*, (6) *Pipeline of Services and Education for Constituents*, and (7) *Valuing Community Knowledge and Voice*. The first ideal characteristics theme, *Reciprocity and Meaningful Exchange of Resources*, refers to equity in the mutual contributions made by and benefits accorded to each partner. One CBO representative expressed how the perceived expertise of academic partners can pose problems to true and authentic partnerships:

> There's the mindset of we're coming to do [this] for you because we've studied and we know these things, which is great. I'm not saying it in a negative way. But there is that approach and that mentality that's kind of the nature of the academic world…I just want us to get to a place where it's… a reciprocal exchange because that is…true partnership…not just I gave you a great experience and you feel warm and fuzzy inside. But there's something of substance that sticks to your bones (CBO19).

The respondent stated that although she desires a more authentic partnership in which CBOs contribute as well as receive resources and services, her experience with colleges and universities has been strictly one-sided. Emphasizing the importance of reciprocity, another participant asserted how partners must establish:

> A seamless exchange of resources. Resources, like knowledge, people, both at the professorial level and the intern level…this seamlessness I think is truly important to the evolution of a partnership…formal credential-based engagements that would allow for the sharing of knowledge from the community level, from the practitioner level to the university level…the idea to have this kind of exchange with the recognition that there are two respective partners, each have something to offer (CBO16).

Successful partnerships are rooted in each party offering complementary contributions to the relationship. Community partners imagined that partnerships could reach new heights through joint sharing of knowledge, experiences, and resources.

The second ideal characteristics theme, *Expansion of Opportunities for Engagement and Access*, refers to developing new avenues for CBOs and constituents to engage with universities on a meaningful level. One respondent envisioned the expansion of her CBO's university partnership such that her agency would house and host educational activities. She stated:

> The community-based organization could become a learning site of the university so that the partnership could expand to that depth…sociology and the different types of research, even medical research that takes place, it's in communities…and the learning takes place in the field. So looking at those partnerships with that type of lens I think would really be important. Community is learning from the university and the university is learning from the community and there's equity in that relationship (CBO4).

To model the reciprocity of an ideal partnership, opportunities for engagement would expand to allow for engaged learning to occur both inside and outside the classroom. Developing CBOs as educational learning sites is one way to deepen mutual access for community and university partners. Other respondents expressed a desire to see their relationship with the university follow a developmental model of partnership. As one participant said:

> I would say that an ideal partnership would potentially have the capacity to grow over time as our needs grow here and as there [are] other areas of the university that [have] different levels of students, graduate students. People with different kinds of availability could perhaps plug in at greater and greater levels to help us more (CBO12).

The growth of a CBO entails changing organizational needs. Likewise, as partnerships between CBOs and universities develop, new prospects for connecting resources emerge. In this case, the respondent noted that students with more advanced training and skills could help CBOs address more complex challenges. Matching needs and assets ensures that partnerships remain relevant, dynamic, and increasingly impactful.

The third theme associated with ideal characteristics, *Individual Student Factors*, refers to

what CBO representatives view as desirable traits tied to professionalism, cultural sensitivity,

and basic skills of individual students placed at CBOs. Respondents articulated that they wished

to have reliable students who possessed a certain level of maturity and competence not only to

handle the assigned tasks, but also to think critically about the social issues to which their

community engagement exposed them. One respondent shared:

> There's so much turnover in this industry to…have more consistency in the customers
> we're working with. So that we're always working with the same history 101 course, or
> whatever it is. That we kind of know that, okay, they're getting this prep in their class
> and so when they come to us, they already have that basic skill…even if the students are
> chancing, it's sort of more consistent and regular…I would say a desire and willingness to
> get out of the city. Because we're definitely in neighborhoods that people perceive to be
> varied…I remember…somebody had to ride the red line from Howard to 95th and back
> and how terrified they were of that. And I think that that's definitely something that I had
> to learn to get over…that you can't be scared, you have to treat people as people and not
> just characters from the television (CBO17).

Having a consistent high-quality volunteer base leads to high-quality service delivery. As

illustrated by the themes described earlier, CBOs' capacity and efficiency can suffer when

service learning students lack the skills necessary for meaningful and effective community-based

work. Representatives from CBOs require dependable students to interact with their

constituents, conduct research, and facilitate activities for their organization.

Effective Support through On-Campus Liaison, the fourth ideal characteristics theme,

refers to securing a familiar, consistent university representative who serves as the primary

contact for the CBO partner. Respondents acknowledged that building a solid relationship with

the university starts with forging strong relationships with individuals at the university. As one

respondent stated, communication is vital:

> I think there has to be a lot of communication between the departments. I think that's one
> thing that you have to have. So being assigned, like through DePaul we're assigned a

specified supervisor and we can contact them if we have questions, they'll contact us. I think that enhances their partnership and that's key (CBO8).

Maintaining effective lines of communication is possible when a primary university contact person is identified. Not only do CBOs benefit from on-campus support systems, but students also benefit by receiving help to address issues they face through their community engagement. One respondent noted:

> Any university is going to have students connected with community organizations. They need to make sure that there is a liaison. There is a point person who can be contacted and who can then listen and then address whatever issues, good, better, and different the student may have, or the CBO may have. To keep the line of communication open, to maintain the effectiveness of the relationship and I mean, every relationship needs a counselor. So I think that the ideal partnership would include that (CBO2).

In this case, the university representative serves as a mediator between the students and the community partners. As the go-between, the university contact must be unbiased and trustworthy to facilitate as successful a partnership as possible. On another level, one respondent wished to see a university representative who could carry out public relations responsibilities:

> And I think the most important is having an on campus champion. Someone who's very passionate about [the CBO] who could promote [the CBO's] opportunities on campus would help tremendously (CBO18).

Beyond merely serving as a primary contact or mediator, university representatives could also act on behalf of CBOs to spread awareness about services, events, and volunteer opportunities. Again, calling to mind the developmental nature of partnerships, respondents described the possibility of deepening their relationships with university staff members.

The fifth ideal characteristics theme is *Clarity of Goals and Plan* and refers to having a mutually agreed upon, understandable, and clearly articulated set of goals and plan of action between university and community partners. To actualize the reciprocity of an ideal partnership, all parties must plainly comprehend project expectations, objectives, and deliverables. One

respondent described the necessity of being on the same page about what must be achieved as a

result of the partnership:

> I think first is a good understanding the general goals of both the CBO and of DePaul and
> an understanding that the relationship needs to be and should be reciprocal, that DePaul is
> getting something out of it. They're just not providing a service, that there actually is
> learning goals and learning gains that they're getting out of the partnership that are of
> value or just as valuable as whatever service that they're providing. And then on the
> organization part, that there's an understanding that DePaul has these learning goals and
> that the program will try to create an atmosphere which they can be achieved, an
> understanding on to whoever the site leader, whoever the program coordinator is, the
> different demands that are put on the CBO by the funders and how their program can help
> or hinder the ability to meet those requirements of the funders (CBO9).

Each party is held to unique institutional expectations, including student learning outcomes and

organizational funding requirements. Transparency regarding such expectations and partnership

goals can allow for the alignment of activities to desired impact. Community partners noted that

greater understanding of students' course objectives would help CBO representatives better

match students' site responsibilities to their learning outcomes.

 Pipeline of Services and Education for Constituents is the sixth ideal characteristics

theme and refers to universities' expanded and targeted support for youth constituents to enhance

their learning, increase their high school graduation rates and the pursuit of higher education, and

improve their social outcomes. Practically speaking, CBO representatives would like to see

more financial support given to students to enroll in college. One respondent noted:

> I would even say on the level of opportunity, as I mentioned earlier, we'd like to be able
> to say, hey. This school has this scholarship that we were able to help procure. Make
> sure you keep your grades up, and there you go. That's something I would really like to
> see developed in the future (CBO5).

Incentives to attend universities would encourage neighborhood youth to consider higher

education a possibility and not merely an aspiration. Exposure to university student mentors

serves as a starting step for youth to imagine future educational and professional careers. CBO

representatives envision a partnership that promotes continued success of school-aged youth

through high school onto college. One respondent imagined the potential integration of

university involvement within the lives of youth constituents:

> I really would love having opportunities where it could really be a pipeline of services.
> We're working with youth who are 12 through 18 who are just at the age where they're
> starting to realize, okay. I'm getting towards the end of the road. And we talk about
> middle school, and we talk about high school. What is next for me? And how do I begin
> to identify what this life of mine will look like 10 and 15, 20 years from now? What are
> my goals, and what are my aspirations? And that's really what this program is helping
> them to identify and shape. But I would really love having a partnership with a
> university that can play a key role in that, that could really help, I think, supplement the
> services that they're getting from their school, from their home, from their community,
> from the [CBO]. How can we add to that (CBO11)?

For representatives of youth-serving CBOs, effectively delivering critical services, learning

opportunities, and social development activities to their constituents can be deepened through

partnership with universities. Importantly, universities possess resources through enrollment,

admissions, and student and academic affairs that can directly improve the educational outcomes

of neighborhood youth. Beyond service learning courses, universities can offer young people

access to a range of opportunities, including higher education.

The seventh and final ideal characteristics theme is *Valuing Community Knowledge and*

Voice and refers to universities acknowledging and respecting the inherent assets of knowledge

and expertise that exist within communities. Respondents described that, ideally, community

members would feel welcome to join universities and CBOs in decision-making associated with

partnership activities, especially those that affect the community as a whole. To enrich and

balance university perspectives, community members would be consulted based on their

extensive experience with their neighborhood and the issues facing it. As one respondent stated:

> I think you get multiple voices at the table, not only the organizations, but the -- some of
> the folks that are impacted by the program in the neighborhood. Giving [voice to] the

other neighborhood stakeholders who are not necessarily affiliated with organizations (CBO10, R2).

Changing the power dynamic that naturally defers to the perceived expertise of the academy can bring all parties to more authentic partnership. Community partners wish to be considered equal players within partnership, such that their knowledge is perceived as just as valuable as university partners'. A respondent expressed her desire to see universities regard communities as places of strengths, assets, and resources:

> But I think as an educational institution, the key piece is the institution offering us as a community so its resources, but at the same time, also acknowledging that there is knowledge in the community that the university will have an opportunity to have access to (CBO4).

Respondents challenged the one-sided model of community engagement that hierarchically positions universities as the sole bearer of services and knowledge to community members. One of the key characteristics of ideal partnership is dignifying the expertise held by each party, particularly community partners whose knowledge often goes unacknowledged and undervalued.

Within the second thematic area of *Perceptions of the Ideal Partnership* regarding structure of the ideal partnership, four themes emerged from the data: (1) *Partnership Alignment,* (2) *Meetings, Trainings, and Orientations*, (3) *Student Recruitment, Management, and Evaluation*, and (4) *Incentives, Activities, and Relationships to Deepen Connection between University and Community*. The first ideal structure theme, *Partnership Alignment*, refers to structural elements and activities that support initial and ongoing communication to guarantee that actual results are aligned with stated expectations. Respondents explained that following a plan outlined within a memorandum of understanding or contract can be especially useful to accomplishing project and partnership goals. One respondent asserted that an ideal partnership entails regular communication from the onset:

You know, an ongoing discussion of the progress. First, the start up. First, a discussion before the study takes place. The idea of trying to set a proposal for the study. Ongoing communication with the organization or the organization for the participating -- in terms of the process of the study. And…what would be the best way of disseminating the findings with organizations or with other groups with the stakeholders…or funders, right? That would be great if the university partner did that (CBO10, R2).

Whether a partnership focuses on community-based service or research, ongoing mutual contact allows for all parties to be on the same page about expectations and achieving goals. The structure of ideal partnerships must include open lines of communication to facilitate activities.

The second ideal structure theme, *Meetings, Trainings, and Orientations*, refers to university- and CBO-driven meetings, trainings, and orientations to prepare partners, periodically check in, and convene in-person to reflect on project progress and the development of the partnership. According to respondents, familiarizing students to the CBO and its constituents can enhance volunteer commitment, quality of work, and connection to course learning outcomes. A respondent who manages a program directed toward English language learners asserted that an effective orientation and training program for university students must be a structural component of the ideal partnership:

Also, anyone involved would have to go through some sort of orientation…there maybe needs to be a week before any programming starts where anybody new they need to go through orientation…so they understand the context that they're stepping into. It's probably not possible, but it would be great also if the DePaul students got some sort of initial training on ESL or language acquisition. [I: Mm-hmm. Great. So it sounds like an orientation to the organization would be helpful as well as...a DePaul...mandated or directed...training or orientation to ESL?] Yeah. I mean, both of them could be done at DePaul, it could be run by DePaul if the site leader is sort of trained with the background and they could deliver it (CBO9).

Orientations can assist service learning students as they become acquainted with potentially unfamiliar neighborhoods. Trainings can help build university students' skills in working with diverse youth constituents and CBO staff members. In addition, community partners expressed

that meetings not only serve to introduce content, but also to promote relationship-building between all parties.

Student Recruitment, Management, and Evaluation, the third ideal structure theme, refers to the structural elements and activities that support recruiting, managing, and evaluating the service learning students placed at CBOs. Respondents described a need for a more improved and targeted process for choosing and matching volunteers to community engagement activities. The current service learning student placement process poses a personnel challenge to some CBO representatives, who use their work time to attend on-campus classes to recruit volunteers. Community partners also expressed that an effective system of monitoring volunteer hours is necessary for working with university students. Importantly, respondents wish to institutionalize an evaluation component that allows for collection of university student feedback:

> A reflection or evaluation, however you want to look at it, I think is really important that organizations understand how volunteers are being affected by their experiences with us. We track what clients do and how they're affected. But we don't necessarily track how our volunteers or interns are affected or disaffected by their experiences with us, and so I think the ideal partnership would give organizations an opportunity to be exposed to that. To be able to see in a neutral environment how students felt about their experience with their organization, I think is a crucial part of how our program design happens and how people can better understand how to improve or change or tweak what they provide for interns or volunteers (CBO3).

Another respondent envisioned building a model of leadership development by inviting service learning students to share ideas via committees to practice non-profit administration strategies. Community partners recognized that university students engaged in curricular community service activities can offer valuable insights about their experiences. Such insights can shed light on CBOs' program impact and inform CBOs' program improvement.

The fourth and final ideal structure theme is Incentives, Activities, and Relationships to Deepen Connection between University and Community and refers to structural elements and

activities that expand and deepen university-community partnerships through connecting

financial, educational, and social resources between parties. Respondents imparted a range of

innovative ideas about how the ideal partnership's structure would allow for more substantial

resource exchange and positive impact on the lives of youth constituents. Many respondents

specifically verbalized that they would like to see universities more actively commit financial

resources to increase higher education access for neighborhood youth. On a broader level, CBO

representatives articulated a desire to connect to more individuals, departments, and centers

within universities. A respondent said:

> I'm not quite sure what players would need to be brought to the table but could even be
> something as basic as office of admissions, any type of community-based partnership
> department that you have…if there could be a meeting with those appropriate people that
> says, here's why we've had a 10-year relationship with them...so to me that would be the
> first step. Maybe them learning more about what we've been doing with DePaul, what
> our program offers, and the type of youth we're serving. And then maybe on DePaul's
> side I'm learning more about programs…so we're hearing about what you offer, where
> you would like to go, the youth you would like to serve, the youth that you would like to
> enroll in your college campus moving forward. And then hearing all that and having all
> these pieces on the table, identifying some appropriate next steps (CBO11).

Respondents noted that their CBOs characteristically partner with only one or two university

departments. Recognizing the promise in growing opportunities for resource exchange through

networking with new affiliates, community partners asserted that higher-level projects lead to

higher-level engagement that leads to higher-level impact. Deepening long-standing

partnerships requires out-of-the-box ideas to go beyond typical transactional partnership

activities. One respondent shared an idea regarding lowering the walls between classroom and

community learning for both students and CBO staff members:

> But the opportunity to be invited to courses and share our experiences with students will,
> I think create more relevance and resonance with the packets of knowledge that they're
> getting in various classes. And inviting our staff to actually enroll in classes, participate
> that way will bring more of the theoretical underpinnings of the work back to the
> practitioner level…it is born of a recognition that we've worked in silos and those silos

have been reinforced. And what we're doing is we're making fuzzy those boundaries to ensure that knowledge creation and the application of knowledge happens in the most effective manner (CBO16).

Respondents stated that they take seriously their role of co-educator of university students, in collaboration with classroom instructors and professors. If ideal partnerships are to uphold the inherent strength of community-based knowledge and expertise, it follows that the structure of partnerships would allow for such knowledge and expertise to be shared. To respondents, the university has much to gain from integrating community knowledge into academic knowledge. In addition, CBO staff can benefit from formal credentialing and education to incorporate theory with practice. Community partners challenged the status quo by visualizing more equitable and reciprocal partnerships between CBOs and universities.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The assessment framework conceptualized by Marullo et al. (2003) serves as the

theoretical background for the current project, which explores community-university

partnerships. CBO representatives were interviewed to assess the extent to which they perceived

that their partnerships with universities advanced social change goals. Although social change is

characteristically slow and complex, steps toward social change that are implemented through

community-based initiatives can be elucidated through assessments (Marullo et al., 2003, p. 57).

Findings augment extant literature regarding community partner perspectives on the effects and

processes associated with partnerships. Feedback from CBO representatives provides a starting

point for investigating community impact of partnerships and for improving community-

university relations in the future. Capturing community partners' perspectives on community-

university partnerships enriches the general discourse on community-centered approaches to

learning, engagement, and collaboration.

Overall, the current investigation produced insights about the ability of community-

university partnerships to advance social change goals from the perspective of community

partners. Findings from this study revealed that partnerships have an impact on capacity,

efficiency, the ability to empower constituents, and the ability to alter policies or structures at

individual, organizational, and community levels. The following discussion summarizes the

nuanced partnership effects and processes experienced by community partners, their respective

CBOs, and their constituents. Community partners' perspectives of the ideal partnership across

characteristics and structural elements will be explored. The study's findings will be

contextualized within the extant literature. Moreover, the discussion will consider practical

implications of the current study's findings, methodological strengths and limitations, and directions for future research.

Capacity

The first thematic content area encompassed capacity effects and processes. Capacity-related effects included factors related to CBO staff, constituents, and university students; new organizational communication, resources, and practices; and increasing presence, knowledge, and awareness, as well as building a stronger community. Processes included meetings and trainings and partnership logistics. The multi-level approach employed through the investigation provided a rich and complex perspective of partnership effects and processes. Respondents pointed to the ways in which their university partnership increased skills, resources, attributes, or relationships of staff members, constituents, and university students. Ultimately, the partnership enhanced CBOs' ability to deliver more and better resources.

Across the board, capacity seemed to be the most relevant content area for respondents. Participants freely offered insights and examples regarding the ways in which the partnership affected individual and organizational capacity, specifically. On the whole, direct service as well as research and evaluation projects sought to affect the capacity of individuals and agencies to do their work better. Researchers have noted that successful community-university partnerships enhance partners' organizational capacity and improve services (Pinto, 2009; Strand et al., 2003). Findings from the present study also coincide with the work of Sandy and colleagues, who asserted that benefits accorded to community partners fulfills a direct need, specifically sustaining and enhancing organizational capacity (Sandy, 2007; Sandy & Holland, 2006). As these researchers noted, university service learning students enable K-12 schools and non-profit

organizations to take on new projects that would have otherwise remained low on the priority list.

Respondents also expanded capacity effects to include influences on university students. Feedback from CBO representatives reflected findings within the extant literature pointing to students' enhanced personal development as a result of engagement with CBOs and community members (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Processes such as trainings, as well as logistics to maintain successful volunteer involvement, facilitated building capacity on individual, organizational, and community levels. The current study advances the existing literature by identifying specific activities community partners associate with building capacity.

Experiences shared by respondents suggested that a certain degree of synergy existed between community and university partners. Synergy is defined as a proximal outcome of partnership that entails "breakthroughs in thinking and action that are produced when a collaborative process successfully combines the knowledge, skills, and resources of a group of diverse participants" (Lasker & Weiss, 2003, p. 21). One step beyond increasing capacity at the individual, organizational, and community levels, synergy addresses the "third culture" created as a shared knowledge structure of partners who convene for a specific common purpose (Adair, Tinsley, & Taylor, 2006). Synergy, as a group product, results when resources are combined, not simply exchanged dyadically (Lasker & Weiss; Lasker et al., 2001). Consequently, the whole is greater than the sum of its single partnership capacity effects.

The phenomenon of synergy is observable through the experiences shared by this study's participants, particularly regarding projects of a collaborative nature. For example, one community partner described her CBO's partnership with the university as one based in trust

"where there is a true understanding of goal, mission, and what it takes to move that mission to reality" (CBO16). Resonance in grassroots-driven and community-focused philosophies between partners generated a strong foundation for synergy to develop. According to the respondent, evidence-based strategies were already employed by the CBO. Collaborative work led to reframing the work for dissemination to a larger audience. Together, community and university partners combined their individual capacities in order to enhance organizational communication strategies. The significance of this achievement was marked by increased financial support for the CBO's direct service, community organizing, and advocacy activities. Respondents noted that synergy manifested in thinking and actions as well as in the relationship of partnerships to the broader community (Lasker et al., 2001).

Efficiency

The second thematic content area covered efficiency-related effects and processes. Efficiency-related effects included factors related to CBO staff and constituents; better use of time and money as well as improved organizational practices; and enhanced service delivery and youth outreach within the community. Processes were identified as CBO logistics and university-driven operations improvement. Positive impacts on efficiency led to CBOs' service delivery that saved time and money. Given the limited resources of some partnering CBOs, it is of utmost importance to make effective use of available staff member and organizational assets. It has been documented in the literature that partnerships often accrue economic benefits to CBOs (Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamon, & Connors, 1998; Miron & Moely, 2006). Researchers noted that community partners recognized that they were receiving services that would not otherwise be available or affordable to them (Gelmon et al., 1998). The current investigation

advances knowledge regarding such benefits by analyzing improvements to efficiency at individual, organizational, and community levels.

The definition of efficiency used within the present examination differs from the conceptualization of this construct used in prior studies, which focus on efficiency of the partnership (Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Lasker et al., 2001). The characterization of efficiency offered by Lasker and colleagues pinpoints what each party brings to the partnership as far as financial resources, in-kind resources, and time. According to these researchers, partnership efficiency relies upon matching partners' roles and responsibilities to interests and skills in order to make best use of what each party has to offer. In contrast, the current study employs a definition of efficiency that entails utilizing current resources to deliver on the CBO's promised objectives. Although partnership efficiency is certainly vital to partnership success, this investigation is primarily concerned with the impact on individual-, organization-, and community-level efficiency.

Respondents shared that their university partnerships led to more improved resources, practices, and systems that increased efficiency. Arguably, efficiency impacts are easy to measure, as they are often quantifiable in the amount of money or time saved. Participants described their experiences of efficiency as doing their work better, faster, and cheaper. The addition of university support through the presence of service learning students seemed to result in immediate effects for CBOs and their staff members. Having an extra pair of hands and a set of eyes, as well as an outsider perspective, alleviated the daily burden of delivering services in spite of limited resources for CBO representatives. "Financial and in-kind resources are the basic building blocks of synergy" and, when offered jointly, can create a combined product more valuable than each resource alone (Lasker et al., 2001, p. 189).

From participants' responses, it appears that partnerships can sometimes detract from the efficiency of CBOs. At the onset of direct service or research engagement, CBO representatives feel compelled to create meaningful experiences for service learning students. Respondents noted that they invest time and other resources to ensure proper set-up and preparation. Efficiency-related processes included logistical activities driven by CBO representatives to equip and coordinate students for community engagement. As noted by Creighton (2008), ineffective implementation of service learning fails to account for how underprepared university students can burden community partner personnel and place increased strain on CBO infrastructure.

For some participants, procedural issues between universities and CBOs also posed challenges to efficiency. Community partner responses regarding such difficulties mirrored findings from Amey, Brown, and Sandmann (2002). The authors contended that organizational structures must bridge across partners, especially when accounting for the involvement of multiple university departments. Otherwise, differing procedures, budgets, staffing, and time frames can cause disruptions to the partnership. Participants within the current study noted that they are willing to risk such disruptions due to the benefits furnished through partnerships. Ultimately, the academic system needs to be demystified for CBO representatives, who can spend unwarranted time navigating contacts, processes, and systems to the detriment of partnership progress (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009; Tryon & Stoecker, 2008).

For those respondents who did not feel that efficiency effects comprised a relevant indicator of partnership success, further exploration into the topic of efficiency might be useful. Partnership development relies heavily on interpersonal relationship-building. Such relationship-building takes time so that partners can get acquainted, build trust and rapport, and negotiate and re-negotiate expectations. Partnership development relies heavily on interpersonal relationship-

building. Such relationship-building takes time so that partners can get acquainted, build trust and rapport, and negotiate and re-negotiate expectations. As described by Davies, Edwards, Gannon, and Laws (2007), the need for time in reflexive work and partnership development does not fit with the neo-liberal emphasis on efficiency and output. The authors pointed out that partnerships tend to be driven by task-oriented agendas that promote getting things done rather than getting to know each other. Community partners who value fostering relationships with their university counterparts may, in turn, view the interpersonal purpose of their partnerships over the objective to affect efficiency. Respondents within the current study who expressed that their partnerships have little consequence on efficiency may prescribe to the notion that relationship-building with the university takes precedent over accomplishing tasks in a timely and resource-effective manner.

Ability to Empower Constituents

The third thematic content area included empowerment-associated effects and processes. Effects related to empowering constituents included factors related to CBO staff and constituents; meeting organizational objectives and promoting self-reliant practices; and relational development and community support. Processes consisted of meetings and trainings as well as service and community engagement. Since all CBOs included in this study had an explicit institutional commitment to youth development, the common constituency for all participating organizations is young people. CBO representatives expressed particular organizational commitments to specific youth populations based on racial and ethnic identity, educational outcomes, socioeconomic standing, and/or other criteria indicating an at-risk and/or underserved status.

The definition of individual-level empowerment utilized by the current investigation corresponds with Zimmerman's (2000) model that entails three dimensions of psychological empowerment: (1) Individuals believe they have the ability to exert control over forces that affect their lives, (2) individuals have the knowledge, skills, and resources to exert this control, and (3) individuals are actively involved in making decisions and taking actions. Based on respondents' experiences tied to building upon these three dimensions, results from the present study indicate that individual-level empowerment objectives were achieved, including increasing confidence, knowledge, and opportunities to take initiative. Reflecting Zimmerman's (2000) dimensions in regards to developing self-efficacy and skills, the effects described by participants coincided with joint creation of new knowledge between partners (Cox, 2000), development of university students as role models for CBOs' youth constituents (Creighton, 2008), and youth constituents' improved academic skills (Schmidt & Robby, 2002). It is noteworthy that respondents extended the conceptualization of empowerment to CBO staff members and university students. Participants noted that partnerships resulted in improved leadership skills and determination of goals, mirroring the literature on students' improved self-efficacy outcomes as a result of service learning and community engagement (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000).

Advancing the conceptualization of empowerment further, Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) categorized empowering organizational structures and practice according to intraorganizational, interorganizational, and extraorganizational levels. Empowering intraorganizational components include organizational viability, leadership, and members' mutual trust. At the interorganizational level, linkages and relations are built between organizations through collaboration, social networking, and alliances. Extraorganizational elements entail organizational actions to influence community life and policy through

information dissemination, resource allocation, and collective efficacy. Although a number of these elements bridge other content areas examined within the current study, there is corroboration between Peterson and Zimmerman's (2004) conceptualizations of organizational empowerment and the responses of this study's participants. For example, intraorganizational leadership has been nurtured through augmented professional development opportunities that uphold CBO members' ownership, authorship, and expertise of their work. In addition, respondents described extraorganizational information dissemination through improved systems of outreach as a result of partnership.

The processes associated with empowering constituents shared by respondents parallel the activities that serve to enable empowerment described by Fawcett et al. (1995). As in the current study, the authors specified that information-sharing, technical assistance, workshops, and training session can help to facilitate empowering effects. Griffith et al. (2010) added to the discourse on processes, stating that experiential and practical learning opportunities in addition to the aforementioned activities are intended to (1) make CBOs more independent, strong and viable, (2) improve CBOs' ability to address community needs, and (3) enrich CBOs' meaningful contributions to partnerships and projects. CBO representatives who participated in the present study shared experiences about staff members, constituents, and university students becoming directly and actively involved in solving problems that affect lives, a proximal outcome of collaborative processes described by Lasker and Weiss (2003).

Critiques regarding empowerment effects associated with community-university partnerships provide context for the current study's findings. DeBlasis (2006) contended that community-based research models of partnership have great potential regarding the ability to empower constituents and to alter policies and structures. In contrast, the author argued that

traditional service learning models are more directed toward capacity and efficiency effects. DeBlasis stated that community-based service learning promotes a charity model of engagement, reinforcing the belief that the university's role is to "fix" social problems. In this manner, privilege and hegemonic power dynamics are supported. Similarly, Dempsey (2010) called attention to the campus/community divide and how partnerships often serve to reproduce inequitable power relations. The author asserted that universities, as holders of wealth, power, and knowledge, must be honest with themselves about the ways in which they have historically engaged with their surrounding communities. Importantly, such approaches to community relations can negatively affect partnerships, perpetuating distrust and suspicion of university representatives' intentions. Dempsey (2010) advocated for academic institutions to candidly and openly assess their negative impacts on communities.

Arguably, the points raised by DeBlasis (2006) do not quite encapsulate the nuances of community-university engagement models. While the author contends that traditional service learning models tend to focus on a "charity" orientation to the detriment of constituents' autonomy, participants in the current study remarked that university students' direct service involvement actually assisted youth constituents and CBO staff members in becoming more independent and self-reliant. Importantly, community-based research models may be theoretically grounded in social justice principles, but may prove exploitative in practice if academic researchers' agendas are privileged over community members'. All community-university partnerships must be critically examined for their unintended disempowering effects (Dempsey, 2010; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Miller & Hafner, 2008). Within the current study, respondents described the challenges they faced associated with empowering constituents, including differing understandings of empowerment between CBO staff members and university

students, boundary issues between constituents and university students, and lack of orientation for community members to comprehend research findings. Despite these challenges, CBO representatives shared positive effects associated with empowerment as a result of partnership. In sum, respondents from the present examination shared that their partnerships, built over time and trust, resulted in empowering effects at multiple levels. El Ansari, Phillips, & Zwi (2002) stated, "Empowerment of the communities is a learning process, development is a lengthy cause and the inclusion of the relevant parties is usually built on incrementalism and gradualism" (p. 157). Certainly, empowering effects develop slowly and gradually as partnerships grow and evolve. Based on the current investigation, at least in some small part, service and research involvement from university partners helped CBOs and their constituents become better skilled, informed, and organized to achieve self-determined goals.

Ability to Alter Policies or Structures

The fourth thematic content area comprised the effects and processes related to altering policies or structures. On the individual level, positive policy or structural change effects emerged as *Change in Perspective*. On the organizational level, positive policy or structural change effects were grouped according to *Advocacy about Work* and *Advocacy for Policy Change*. On the community level, positive policy or structural change effects were revealed as *Change in Practice*. Effects that were not positive emerged as *Challenges to Altering Policies or Structures*. Processes associated with altering policies or structures included *Advocacy*, *Research*, and *University Student Development*. To researchers, altering policies or structures not only entails dismantling external oppressive systems, but also shifting the natural tendency for community-university partnerships to favor the university partner in terms of agenda-setting and resulting benefits (Dempsey, 2010). Stoecker and colleagues (Stoecker, 2003; Stoecker,

1999; Stoecker & Bonacich, 1992) insisted that the democratization of knowledge and resistance of oppression should be main partnership priorities, pushing for the radicalization of university approaches to community work. To Stoecker (2007), social change hinges upon (1) the change that specific projects are designed to produce and (2) the ways in which such initiatives organize and develop community members as independent knowledge producers. In this manner, structural change is tied to empowering effects and processes.

Indeed, CBO representatives interviewed for the current study remarked on the promise of partnerships to address systemic issues. Participants noted that shifting the individual-level perspectives of university students, CBO staff members, and constituents could influence critical analysis and action via questioning the status quo. In line with respondents' experiences, a service learning project described by Davidson et al. (2010) prompted critical questioning and dialogue around service systems and inherent societal inequities. Participants within the present investigation cited new advocacy objectives and career choices fostered by partnership activities. Supported by Griffith et al. (2010) and Miller and Hafner (2008), critical thinking regarding the interactions between individual attitudes and behaviors and societal norms, structures, and policies can spur targeted partnership interventions with potentially systemic impacts.

Although not all respondents indicated that their university partnerships had extensively altered policies or structures, participants acknowledged how partnerships are intended to positively affect overall community well-being. In keeping with respondents' feedback, researchers have identified contributions to quality of life through structural community improvement as key to successful partnerships (Harkavy, 2005). The extant literature also contains commentaries regarding how partnerships can evolve to address complex social problems through interventions and political action directed toward changing structures (Boyte,

2003; Henry & Breyfogle, 2006; Israel, 2003). Essentially, partnership development can start with direct service objectives and deepen into political and social action objectives. To some researchers, embracing a community organizing model rather than a social service model of engagement can progress a partnership to enact systemic change over time (Boyte, 2003; Henry & Breyfogle, 2006; Stoecker, 2003).

While some researchers have visualized the objectives of community-university partnerships on a continuum from charity to social change, other researchers have suggested that partnerships may not necessarily operate in this manner. The notion of "maturing" partnership objectives from direct service to transformation might not be possible or even desirable. Interestingly, respondents in the current study consistently noted that the content area associated with the ability to alter policies or structures did not necessary apply to their partnership with the university. Insights from Morton's (1995) study of university students, faculty, administrators, and community partners shed light on the argument against the charity/social change continuum. The author reasoned that three distinct paradigms of service exist, labeled as charity, project development, and social change. According to Morton (1995):

> Each paradigm is based upon distinctive worldviews, ways of identifying and addressing problems, and long-term visions of individual and community transformation…each paradigm contains a range from "thin" to "thick," that is from expressions which lack integrity or depth to those which have integrity and depth. Educationally, this means that, rather than moving students along a continuum, we are doing two things simultaneously: challenging and supporting students to enter more deeply into the paradigm in which they work; and intentionally exposing students to creative dissonance among the three forms" (p. 21).

"Thinness" leads to more disempowering and hollow engagement while "thickness" can be more sustaining and revolutionary. What Morton (1995) adds to the discussion, and what coincides with the experiences shared by this study's respondents, is an optimistic view of charity and project development in addition to the reality of social change approaches to service. Although

Morton's (1995) typology primarily applies to students, its assertions can be useful to understanding partnerships as a whole.

The concept of an evolving partnership between universities and communities (Boyte, 2003; Henry & Breyfogle, 2006; Israel, 2003) is challenged by Morton's (1995) paradigms of community engagement. Applying a paradigmatic model to the present study can underscore nuances within partnership development. The current investigation is organized according to four types of partnership goals that seek to effect social change: increased capacity, enhanced efficiency, improved ability to empower constituents, and improved ability to alter policies and structures. Extending Morton's (1995) typology to these partnership goals, each can be considered a separate paradigm with potential for transformative approaches.

The "thickness" or "thinness" of engagement within each partnership goal dictates the degree of integrity and depth that direct service, project development, and social change initiatives can take. For example, respondents described the "shallow" and affective impact of changing individuals' perspectives as well as the "deeper" structural impact of influencing local and state policymakers. Applying Morton's (1995) paradigm typology to partnerships also gives rise to clear distinctions between engagement goals and activities. Some respondents did not see altering policies or structures as applicable to their experiences, citing the nature of the partnership and the mission of the CBO. Those respondents whose partnerships and CBOs concentrated on direct and social service expressed satisfaction with fulfilling capacity and efficiency goals. Respondents' experiences demonstrated that policy and structural change might not be possible, desirable, or applicable to their partnerships. Findings from the current study showed that it is instructive to regard each social change goal as a paradigm in and of itself rather than a set of goals resting on a continuum.

Ideal Partnership

The fifth content area contained characteristics and structural elements tied to perceptions of the ideal partnership between CBOs and universities. Ideal partnership characteristics emerged within these seven categories: (1) *Reciprocity and Meaningful Exchange of Resources*, (2) *Expansion of Opportunities for Engagement and Access*, (3) *Individual Student Factors*, (4) *Effective Support through On-Campus Liaison*, (5) *Clarity of Goals and Plan*, (6) *Pipeline of Services and Education for Constituents*, and (7) *Valuing Community Knowledge and Voice.* Ideal partnership structural elements were revealed within these four categories: (1) *Partnership Alignment*, (2) *Meetings, Trainings, and Orientations*, (3) *Student Recruitment, Management, and Evaluation*, and (4) *Incentives, Activities, and Relationships to Deepen Connection between University and Community*. Respondents often compared an ideal notion of partnership to their existing partnerships, stating what was lacking, "in-progress," or could be improved based on their experiences with university staff members, faculty, and students. On the whole, respondents' conceptualizations of the ideal partnership speak to the desire to extend, expand, and deepen processes to actualize mutual benefits to all parties. To use Morton's (1995) language, respondents expressed aspirations to "thicken" and therefore sustain and innovate their engagement with universities.

The characteristics and structural elements envisioned by respondents within the current study are reflected in the extant literature on service learning, community-based and community-engaged research, and community-university partnerships. Consistencies existed across research, including the characteristics of clear goals and plans (CCPH, 2006; Doll et al., 2012; Strand et al., 2003), valuing and respecting partners (CCPH, 2006; Davis et al., 2008; Minkler et al., 2008; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2005; Strand et al., 2003), and partnership alignment (Doll et al.,

2012; Miao et al., 2011; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Minkler et al., 2008; Seifer, 2006; Strand et al., 2003). As reviewed earlier in this study, models of community-university partnerships comprised other common characteristics including trust, leadership, mutual benefit, shared ownership, and equity. The present investigation adds to the understanding of ideal partnerships from the perspective of CBO representatives.

Respondents spoke candidly about the promise of partnerships to grow more equitably regarding benefits and contributions. Noted by Kecskes (2006), it is vital that all parties accept and uphold egalitarian, reciprocal, and mutual principles to ensure successful partnerships. Creighton (2008) documented that community partners view equitable treatment as a major indicator in determining whether or not a partnership is successful. As stated before, the notion of reciprocal, non-exploitative partnerships between university and community members has evolved from empowerment literature (Harper & Salina, 2000). Also drawing from Community Psychology, Nelson, Prilleltensky, and MacGillivary (2001) asserted that inherently partnerships must be based in the following values: caring, compassion, community, health, self-determination, participation, power-sharing, human diversity, and social justice. Established norms to support reflective practice between partners are critical in integrating such values into action (Nation et al., 2011). Collective reflection, assessment, and evaluation activities were strongly endorsed by respondents within the current study, who stated that such mechanisms shed light on areas of growth and improvement for their partnerships.

In contrast, Putnam, Phillips, and Chapman (1996) described an undesirable, non-reciprocal model of partnership in which CBOs merely receive what universities offer. The authors used a container metaphor to criticize how the university chooses when and how to intervene into communities. Similarly, some respondents explained that the direction of their

partnership was mostly dictated by the university's guidelines and schedule. Coming into more

authentic partnership may require some shifts regarding more equitable contributions from each

party. As Williams, Labonte, Randall, and Muhajarine (2005) stated, contributions must be of

equal value, if not of equal nature. Respondents within the current study imagined university

and community representatives engaging in projects, activities, and resource exchanges as

equally contributive and benefitting partners rather than as mere providers or empty containers.

Moreover, the ideal characteristic theme labeled *Reciprocity and Meaningful Exchange of*

Resources is closely linked to the notion of *Valuing Community Knowledge and Voice*. The

production of reciprocity through partnership hinges upon perceptions of expertise and who

possesses it. Although researchers have drawn attention to the campus/community divide

(Dempsey, 2010), other researchers have argued that skills and knowledge between the two

entities are not as divergent as stated. According to Williams et al. (2005), there is a dangerous

tendency to oversimplify epistemological differences between partners, reifying distinctions

between community experiential knowledge and academic technical expertise. Neither the

community nor the academy singularly owns a certain type of knowledge or expertise.

Representatives from both entities can claim proficiencies gained through education, training,

and practice. In actuality, community partners often possess technical research, evaluation, and

analysis skills while academic partners possess their own experiential knowledge tied to the

communities in which they live (Williams et al., 2005).

The competencies, capacities, and proficiencies possessed by each partner amount to

technical power (El Ansari et al., 2002). Practically speaking, professional wisdom and

community lay knowledge overlaps in terms of content. El Ansari et al. (2002) examined the

degree to which university and community partners attribute such technical power to each other

across five areas of expertise: (1) educational competences, (2) partnership fostering skills, (3) community involvement capacities, (4) change agent proficiencies, and (5) strategic and management capacities. Such broad and pragmatic expertise areas transcend distinctions between community and academic knowledge. However, while community members were generally positive of the expertise of university partners, the latter group was less positive in their assessment of community members' skills and capacities. Therefore, attention to perceived rifts in partners' skills and expertise can illuminate power dynamics within partnerships.

To rectify misconceptions regarding partners' expertise so that *Valuing Community Knowledge and Voice* can become a reality, Freire's (1998) concept of posture should be considered. Shifting perspectives can lead to shifting power relations. Applying Freire's (1998) concept to partnership, each partner must assume a certain "posture of one who does not consider him- or herself to be the sole possessor of truth or the passive object of ideology" (p. 119). Since academic and professional expertise is often elevated at the expense of community lay knowledge (El Ansari et al., 2002; Putnam et al., 1996; Williams et al., 2005), it is edifying to challenge perceptions of expertise and who possesses it.

Respondents within the current study offered recommendations for the fluid redistribution of "expertise" both within classrooms and out in community settings. Advocating for modified partnership structures in the future, CBO representatives suggested that community members participate as both co-educators and co-learners in and with the academy through increased opportunities to teach and attend courses. Some CBO representatives shared that, as a result of their partnership, they have gained university credentials or have become more motivated to continue their education at the university. Blurring the line between academic

expertise and community lay knowledge capitalizes on the competencies that can be jointly built and collectively owned through partnership.

Findings from the current study can also be contextualized according to the extensive literature exploring the perspectives of students engaged in community-university partnerships. Aside from research focused on learning outcomes achievement, other studies have delved into what students perceive as necessary conditions for partnership success. Challenges to community engagement faced by students appear to corroborate with perspectives shared by respondents within the present examination. In particular, student respondents expressed a desire for universities and CBOs to facilitate better goal-setting, communication, and training with students both prior to and during community engagement (Rosing et al., 2010). These components of ideal partnerships coincide with those shared by community partner respondents, especially *Effective Support through On-Campus Liaison*, *Clarity of Goals and Plan*, and *Meetings, Trainings, and Orientations*. University staff members are uniquely positioned to facilitate communication, coordination, preparation, and understanding of objectives for CBO representatives and university students.

After becoming acquainted with universities and taking part in opportunities to utilize university resources through service learning and research, CBO representatives envisioned other ways in which they could connect their youth constituents with institutions of higher learning. For the respondents within the present study, organizational efforts center primarily on youth development. Respondents visualized that, in partnership with CBOs, universities would nurture a pipeline of comprehensive services leading to positive academic and social outcomes, improved retention rates, and increased access to higher education for their youth constituents. CBO representatives consider graduation from high school and pursuit of a college degree a key

indicator of success. To respondents, it logically follows that as a result of the mentorship

received from university service learning students, youth constituents are motivated to attend the

universities that those service learning students represent. One of the biggest barriers cited by

respondents is the lack of financial means to cover the cost of college.

The ideas shared by respondents run parallel to the aspirations articulated within Promise

Neighborhood, Choice Neighborhood, and other cradle-to-career models. To address mounting

opportunity gaps and social inequities, place-based and integrative education strategies have

been heralded as the solution (McKoy, Vincent, & Bierbaum, 2011). As stated by Biglan, Cody,

Aldridge II, Dubroski, and Kjellstrand (2011), the Promise Neighborhood initiative entails

evidence-based school and family interventions directed toward a single goal: "Children attend

college and escape poverty through their ability to obtain well-paying jobs" (p. 26). Cradle-to-

career strategies are comprehensive, data-driven plans that begin near birth and focus on

improving measurable progress all the way to job readiness (Smith, 2012). These initiatives

draw heavily upon the involvement of multiple educational, corporate, public, and non-profit

partners. In particular, university partners serve as third-party intermediaries and play an

important leadership role in channeling ideas, mobilizing collective resources, building capacity,

and positioning local work within the broader national context through research and

documentation (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009).

Given the broad-based support for these initiatives on local, statewide, and national

levels, CBOs and their staff members are eager to see how cultivating their university

partnerships might result in positive impacts on the lives of their youth constituents.

Perspectives on the ideal partnership described by respondents may not differ significantly from

what is found in the extant literature. However, the voices of community partners are

substantiated as vital insights rooted in the current economic and social context. Recent attention

to pipeline and cradle-to-career models of youth development will continue to shape the nature

of community-university partnerships, how partnership success is defined, and how community

impact is measured.

Implications

Findings from the current study advance the understanding of community-university

partnerships within the fields of service learning, community engagement, community-based

research, and Community Psychology. Perspectives from CBO representatives signal promising

directions that new partnerships can take. Moreover, respondents specified possible avenues to

deepen the integrity of existing partnerships. The present examination has implications for

partnership research and practice. The following section will detail how findings from the

current study carry ramifications regarding these three areas: (1) multidirectional nature of

partnerships, (2) critiques of engagement models, and (3) partnership evaluation and assessment.

First, insights from respondents extend knowledge of the multidirectional nature of

partnership. In responding to the question regarding individual-level effects related to

empowering constituents, participants expanded *constituents* to include clients and youth

constituents, CBO staff members, university service learning students, university staff members,

and university faculty members. Respondents' interpretations of the question speak to the

multiple players, interactions, and relationships within community-university partnerships.

Although the content area primarily addresses the empowerment of youth constituents served by

CBOs, respondents were cognizant that partnership activities have an impact on the university

and its students, too.

Contributions and benefits flow in many directions. Participants observed that one-on-one mentorship provided by university students resulted in youth constituents gaining educational and social skills. Furthermore, some CBO representatives remarked that when they lead university students through critical social analysis and tailor community engagement experiences to university students' course objectives and syllabus, CBOs help students achieve learning outcomes. Such assertions illustrate the multidirectional nature of partnerships. Contributions do not simply flow from one entity to produce benefits (or losses) to another. Instead, exchanges occur between university and community partners in numerous ways.

Bringle, Clayton, and colleagues (Bringle et al., 2009; Clayton et al., 2010) conceived a model of differentiating relationships that adds to the discourse on the multidirectional nature of partnerships. The authors' SOFAR structural model provides a useful framework for contextualizing this study's findings and their implications. As stated earlier in this paper, the authors deconstructed the idea of 'partnership' into relationships between multiple constituencies: Students, Organizations in the community, Faculty, Administrators on campus, and Residents in the community. Through SOFAR, the authors gave attention to the interactions within multiple dyads across these constituencies, arguing against perceptions of a single relationship existing between partners. Bringle, Clayton, and colleagues do not view either the university or the CBO as a monolithic entity. Accounting for the subgroups within "campus" and "community" further explicates the diverse cultures, goals, resources, roles and relationships that exist among the groups.

Respondents within the current study confirmed that a wide range of interactions and relationships are involved in their university partnerships. Additionally, respondents noted the multidimensional nature of the university, commenting on the possibility of networking with

new departments throughout the institution. Students, faculty, and administrators represent

different constituencies at universities. Although certain characteristics and structures (e.g.,

communication) were applicable to the university as a whole, respondents often distinguished

between partnering university students and university staff when sharing their experiences.

Conversely, Clayton, Bringle, and colleagues (Bringle et al., 2009; Clayton et al., 2010) stated

that within "community," CBOs and neighborhood residents are separate entities. Respondents

made distinctions between their CBOs and community members, citing barriers to community

collaboration including neighborhood politics, limited parental involvement, and lack of

awareness of CBOs' resources. Contextualizing the findings within the SOFAR model affirms

the value of investigating the wide range of relationships, interactions, and activities that drive

partnerships. Fundamentally, the crux of successful partnership rests on successful relationships.

Secondly, the current study's findings are relevant to critiques of engagement

approaches. Two types of community engagement emerge as worthy of scrutiny: (1) Status quo

community engagement and (2) transformational community engagement. Seemingly, the two

models occupy the most diametrically opposite points on a line. It is noteworthy that

respondents' experiences revealed potential dilemmas with espousing either approach.

Problematizing these approaches to community engagement does more than simply make a case

for the middle ground; critical analysis is necessary for discerning the competing values and

goals across the approaches that hinder quality partnerships.

One model of community engagement is the historically hierarchical university-driven

approach. This status quo method of engagement prompts the container metaphor to illustrate

the top-down flow of agendas and directives from institutions of higher learning to affect

communities, whose voices are not included in such agendas (Putnam et al., 1996).

Respondents' experiences affirmed the need to examine the status quo of their partnerships with universities. Participants within the current study expressed discontent with the one-sided hierarchical model that positions universities as the sole bearer of services and knowledge to community members. As noted by community partners, an ideal partnership characteristic entails dignifying each party's skills and resources, particularly community partners whose knowledge is often relegated in comparison to academic expertise.

At best, the status quo approach to partnership is potentially transactional, "instrumental and often designed to complete short-term tasks. Persons come together on the basis of an exchange, each offering something the other desires" (Clayton et al., 2010, p. 7). In transactional relationships, benefits are accrued by both partners, but long-term change is not an expectation. At worst, status quo relationships can prove to be exploitative, "so unilateral that, intentionally or unintentionally, they take advantage of or harm one or both parties" (Clayton et al., p. 8). Although respondents did not explicitly identify their experiences as exploitative, some respondents did express that they wished to improve the current state of partnership with universities. For some participants, deepening their shallow interactions and relationships could potentially lead to more authentic partnership with university staff members, faculty, and students. To demonstrate, top-down approaches to communication (e.g., e-mail blasts rather than individual and personal phone calls or site visits) soured community partners' perceptions of the level of commitment and authenticity they could expect from their university partners. Power dynamics have consequently diminished the ability for universities and communities to achieve synergy within partnerships.

However, challenging the status quo approach can transform partnerships so that synergy is robust. Recommendations for transforming partnerships surfaced from respondents' feedback.

Such insights revealed new directions for lowering the wall between universities and

communities to allow for the flow of academic expertise and experiential knowledge and, most

importantly, for the creation of joint wisdom. Institutional and structural changes can promote

educational exchanges to occur inside the classroom through welcoming community members

and CBO representatives to co-teach alongside faculty and co-learn along with students.

Deconstructed power relations can take place elsewhere in the university, through increased

networking between community partners and other institutional departments and centers to

facilitate equitable research, service, and training opportunities between partners. Community

settings could serve as neighborhood sites of learning and engagement. Establishing localized

sites of knowledge production could help ensure proportionate and even full ownership of

engagement methods and products (e.g., as in action research) to community members.

As noted by McDowell, Nagel, Williams, and Canepa (2005), "When abstract reasoning

is offered as the primary means by which we can understand the world, knowledge that resides in

practice and experience is often devalued" (p. 30). Transforming the nature of partnerships

requires changing the perception of how knowledge is created and valued. Respondents'

recommendations for changing status quo partnerships fit into McDowell et al.'s (2005)

conceptualization of disruptive design and facilitation to uncover, identify, and value the

knowledge gained from community members' work. The authors stated that:

> The term disruptive refers to the creation of environments that upset those stereotypes
> and habits of mind that limit one's ability to be self-reflective, empathetic and open to
> change. A disruptive environment helps people become aware of, and even question,
> their mental models and assumptions about the way the world works (McDowell et al.,
> 2005, p. 30).

Through processes that encourage critical analysis and reflexivity, community members can

become engaged in collective learning experiences. McDowell et al. (2005) stated that such

engagement hinges upon successfully addressing issues tied to the ownership, authority, and power over the knowledge that community members possess. Establishing more equitable processes and interactions between partners can lead to fair and just partnerships between universities and communities.

The second model of community engagement is the transformational approach. This method aims to alter the status quo in terms of partnership power dynamics as well as external policies and systems. Notably, the framework for the current study draws from Marullo et al. (2003), who overtly endorsed personal, social, and political transformation through social change initiatives. The researchers emphasized the community driven and collaborative nature of ideal partnerships. Marullo et al. (2003) asserted that within collaborative assessments, data ought to be "jointly owned, analysis jointly derived, and responsibilities for altering programs, behaviors, policies, or institutions shared" (p. 60). Mutual ownership over processes can lead to shared rewards and benefits through shared recognition, authorship, and real-world social impact (Alcantara et al., under review). Despite the ostensibly positive impact attributed to transformational approaches, findings within the current study suggest that some partnerships may not be intended for social change. Arguably, the nuances of community engagement models must be critically examined, including the one on which the current study operates.

Some respondents shared that the nature of their university partnerships did not allow for transformation to occur, especially in reference to altering policies and structures. Participants stated that the goals of their projects, CBOs, or partnerships were not focused on structural change. Each social change goal is distinct from one another and not all partnerships can address all types of goals (Marullo et al., 2003). As noted earlier, DeBlasis (2006) distinguished between (a) the community-based research model that aligns with the ability to empower constituents and

to alter policies and structures and (b) the traditional service learning model that supports

enhancing capacity and efficiency. Research and service learning models do not operate

identically. Although such distinctions might be overly simplistic, they are useful in

understanding the different purposes that partnerships can serve. Additionally, this

categorization helps in analyzing approaches to community engagement.

A popular parable illustrates the dilemmas of these approaches. A shortened version

follows:

> One day, villagers gathered together by the river. As they shared food and conversation,
> someone noticed a baby in the river, struggling and crying. The baby was going to
> drown! Someone rushed to save the baby. Then, they noticed another screaming baby in
> the river, and they pulled that baby out. Soon, more babies were seen drowning in the
> river, and the townspeople were pulling them out as fast as they could. It took great
> effort, and they began to organize their activities in order to save the babies as they came
> down the river. As everyone else was busy in the rescue efforts to save the babies, two of
> the townspeople started to run away along the shore of the river. "Where are you going?"
> shouted one of the rescuers. "We need you here to help us save these babies!" The two
> townspeople replied, "We are going upstream to stop whoever is throwing them in!"
> (Pierce, 2008; see also Schutz & Sandy, 2011).

It is undeniable that addressing the root cause of social problems is vital. On the other hand, it is

likewise impossible to ignore the urgent and present needs facing CBOs and the constituencies

they are intended to serve. In reality, as noted by respondents in the present study, the

transactional nature of their partnership fulfilled CBOs' needs and expectations. University

involvement in direct service activities such as mentoring and tutoring youth constituents

allowed CBOs to deliver on promised organizational objectives. In addition, some CBOs are not

equipped to carry out involved social change agendas. Not all CBOs explicitly (or implicitly)

uphold advocacy or policy change as an organizational priority. Also, respondents suggested

that they do not have the grounding or the interest in measuring transformational change.

Similar to Morton's (1995) typology, partnerships may be distinguished according to charity,

project, or social change; perhaps a continuum of partnership does not apply.

Findings from the current study illustrate that it is difficult to typify the "ideal partnership." Affirmed by respondents, ongoing critical analysis conducted jointly between partners is necessary. One repercussion of the current investigation is questioning the extent to which the university actually adopts social change goals. Turning attention to colleges and universities, it appears that institutionally addressing the content areas of capacity, efficiency, empowering constituents, and altering policies and structures could help facilitate the achievement of those social change goals in partnership with CBOs. To what degree do university centers of community engagement uphold these principles in aspiration and in practice? Together, partners can determine which goals each partner and the partnership as a whole espouses, the extent to which such goals are desirable across partners, and what steps to take to achieve such goals.

Third, the present investigation informs the development and refinement of partnership assessment and evaluation methods. Respondents emphasized the importance of institutionalizing partnership assessment to determine outcomes achievement and to improve processes. Strengthening the ability of partners to evaluate their work begins with developing and systematizing practices that strengthen the feedback loop. In capturing community partners' perspectives on partnership, there seemed to be a heavy focus on output and service delivery and not as much attention on a theory of action. What *is* the overall intended impact of partnerships? Respondents implied that the research questions and indicators are often driven by external entities such as funders. As noted by Rubin (2000), there exists a dilemma between funders' "need for concrete, tangible, and quantitative measurements of community benefits and partners' need for intensive qualitative analysis of the process by which working relationships are built

and maintained" (p. 224-225). This study points to a promising opportunity to generate a theory

of action as well as associated evaluation questions and indicators of success as determined

between partners.

Strengthening assessment methods carries great potential for partnership maintenance

and improvement. Importantly, systematizing assessment and evaluation has implications on

effective internal and external communications regarding the partnership. An articulated theory

of action or theory of change would allow partners to understand and communicate the logic

underlying their partnerships. Evaluation plans would be developed to measure achievements of

the stated intended impacts, outcomes, outputs, activities, and inputs. The establishment of

partnership outcomes would coincide with the standardization of university student learning

outcomes. It appears that the ground is fertile for innovating how partners tell their stories.

On the other hand, key challenges described by Rubin (2000) in addressing a national

evaluation of community-university partnerships illustrate why a theory of change evaluation for

community-university partnerships might not be viable. Such evaluations require "that the

model of community context, dynamics, and planned interventions can be explicated through

interaction with the participants and then measured over the course of several years" (Rubin,

2000, p. 224). The execution of longitudinal evaluation plans is shaped by real world challenges

including limited financial and temporal resources. Besides these obstacles, the author also

noted that a diversity of projects also presents a challenge in devising standard evaluation

approaches. From the current study, it was evident that the interactions between CBO and

university representatives differed depending on the project type (e.g., direct service or

research/evaluation). Corralling the many interests, goals, and agendas of partnership

stakeholders into a coherent, measurable theory of change is certainly a daunting task. However,

respondents contended that evaluation, reflection, and ways of measuring impact were crucial

components of ideal partnerships. Assessing partnerships should employ a multi-constituency

approach to capture perspectives of students, faculty, and community partners (Gelmon, Holland,

Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2001). Findings from the present investigation point to the

necessity of including the voices of community partners in evaluating partnership success.

Indeed, validating research and evaluation findings requires "the community's knowledge and

experience as a critical prism through which meaning is constructed, and the utility of the

findings for effecting social change" (Marullo et al., 2003, p. 59).

Marullo et al. (2003) insisted that a one-size-fits-all assessment strategy does not exist.

The contextual differences of universities and communities limit the ability to use unified

measures to draw comparisons across groups, if that is an articulated evaluation goal. However,

various models including tailored versions of Marullo et al.'s (2003) framework can be utilized

to appropriately fit partnership assessments. For example, assessments can be shaped according

to the level of analysis, the type of change goal, and the short-term process and long-term effect

outcomes (Marullo et al., 2003). SOFAR (Bringle et al., 2009; Clayton et al., 2010) also

provides a strong starting point for evaluating dyadic relationships and outcomes achieved

through interactions between constituency groups. Clayton et al. (2010) developed the

Transformational Relationship Evaluation Scale (TRES) to measure the extent to which

relationships are exploitative, transactional, or transformational. Within the TRES, exploitative

options entail negative outcomes to one or both parties. Transactional options reflect benefits to

one or both parties but no growth. Transformational options signify growth and enhanced

capacity through partnership. The authors also noted the potential for larger scale analyses (e.g.,

inter-organizational and inter-institutional relationships) through SOFAR and TRES. Other

partnership assessment methods include comprehensive case studies (Driscoll et al., 1996), critical analysis through a self-assessment rubric (Furco, 2002) or a matrix/multiple method approach (Gelmon et al., 2001), collaborative process and empowerment evaluation (Harper et al., 2003), and performance evaluation (Ferrari & Worrall, 2000). Selecting appropriate methods depends on context, eventual uses, and the nature of the indicators (Gelmon, Foucek, & Waterbury, 2005). Ultimately, the merit of partnerships will be determined by the extent to which partners conclude that each is contributing in an effective manner to activities that have a positive impact on community and university outcomes (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988).

Strengths and Limitations

This study augments the extant literature by contributing community partners' voices to the partnership research. Although recent attention has been paid to the standpoint of community partners, research on service learning, community engagement, and partnerships remains dominated by university-based (e.g., student, faculty, researcher) perspectives. Addressing partnership effects to individuals, organizations, and communities, this study seeks to delineate impacts at various levels. Improving partnerships hinges upon honest and candid critical analysis by multiple stakeholders. To that end, the current investigation endorses a critical approach to examining partnerships, goals espoused by partners, and possibilities for transformation. The findings presented here addressed the complexities of partnership, accounting for the nuanced and challenging experiences of community partners engaged with universities. In sampling participants who had worked with two different campus centers of community engagement, a range of service learning and community-based research projects were represented in the experiences shared here. Seeking to bridge theory and action, this study is practitioner-minded, but rooted in the existing knowledge base. Also, the current investigation

advances the discourse on the extent to which partnerships work toward social change goals, which has not been broadly studied within the existing literature.

In spite of this, the present examination is not fully inclusive; other conceptualizations of social change goals (e.g., resistance, liberation, democratization) were outside the scope of the paper. This study also lacks comprehensiveness in terms of the participants represented, who were chosen based on their engagement with two specific university departments. Admittedly, there exist many entities within the university, and even within each CBO, who serve as a point of interaction (Bringle et al., 2009; Clayton et al., 2010). Since this study served as a starting, exploratory step for partnership assessment, beginning with the two departments most explicitly known as university hubs for community engagement was intentional. The community partner feedback presented here was not corroborated by data collected from students and faculty, but again, it is clear that those perspectives are prominent within the extant literature. Also, CBO representatives, not community members, participated in the study. Understandably, distinctions must be drawn between CBO staff members and neighborhood residents so as not to essentialize the conception of community (Dempsey, 2010). However, CBOs often serve as universities' direct partners as well as the primary vehicles through which strategies are implemented (Zakocs & Guckenberg, 2007). CBOs play a vital role in facilitating university-engaged activities and delivering community-based services. Participation from CBO staff members within the current study led to valuable insights that elucidate the nature of community-university partnerships.

Importantly, the professional affiliations between the researcher, the Steans Center and the Egan Urban Center, and partnering CBOs shaped the description and analysis of the study's results. As a strength, the researcher's familiarity with partnership and project components provided context for clarifying participants' responses. As a limitation, the researcher's position

within the university might have curbed respondents' candid criticism about partnerships. It

must be noted that the researcher primarily identified as a graduate student, not as a staff

member. Recruitment materials named the researcher and her graduate advisor, both affiliated

with the Department of Psychology, as main contacts. The researcher's identification with the

Steans Center or the Egan Urban Center was not explicitly stated within any correspondence.

Future Research and Practice

The current study paves the way for future partnership research. Forthcoming

investigations and evaluations can utilize different methods for investigating partnership impact

on social change goals. Importantly, studies can account for the multiple goals that various

stakeholders espouse by tailoring assessment methods to capture such information. Future

research should reference Marullo et al. (2003) to customize research approaches according to

level of analysis and type of outcomes. Since the present investigation uses qualitative

approaches to research and analysis, it would be interesting to examine the same concepts using

quantitative methods. Specifically, measures targeting partnership capacity, efficiency, ability to

empower constituents, and ability to alter policies or structures can be developed and validated.

Findings from the current study also inform the formation of potential assessment and evaluation

tools to pilot test with relevant entities, including community partners.

In addition, future research should employ more participatory methods to determine the

achievement of social change goals. Ideally, the knowledge and expertise of all partners are

valued, appreciated, and sought in the pursuit of partnership objectives. Diverse viewpoints are

necessary in gaining as comprehensive a picture of partnership as possible. Marullo et al. (2003)

insisted that their framework relies upon "reaching beyond one's own discipline to seek out

methods, instruments, and tools that help us to understand better social change processes" (p.

66). Acknowledging that engaging multiple stakeholders in research question creation, data collection, data analysis, and communication of findings can be taxing on time, money, and people, the feasibility of such participation must be gauged accordingly.

Ultimately, findings from the current study indicate practices that universities and CBOs can adopt to actualize partnership potential together. Respondents suggested that there is promise in creating space that promotes meaningful conversations, allows partners to jointly reflect on processes and outcomes, and helps partners collaboratively pinpoint ways to improve relationships, interactions, and the partnership as a whole. Creating such space may require challenging the status quo. As noted by respondents, ineffective communication and divisive notions of expertise have fortified walls between the academy and the community. However, respondents also shared that activities such as service learning, community-based research and evaluation, and other university involvements have bridged the campus-community divide. CBO representatives described the deep and lasting benefits accorded to them, their fellow CBO staff members, their CBOs as a whole, and to the communities they serve as a result of partnership. It appears that, in many ways, the ground is fertile to continue critical discussion surrounding the multiple and varied impacts of community-university partnerships. Primarily, the present examination hopes to inform, influence, and inspire present and future practices that draw universities and CBOs into more authentic partnership to produce positive social outcomes for youth, families, and communities at large.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Within recent years, researchers have turned their attention to assessing community impact of community-university partnerships. The sustainability of successful partnerships hinges upon evaluating partnership outcomes and integrating community feedback into practice. Successful partnerships between universities and community-based organizations (CBOs) have the potential to critically address social issues and attain social change goals, but to what extent do existing partnerships actualize this potential? The present Dissertation research yields important insights that address this question.

Marullo et al. (2003) described four types of goals associated with social change initiatives: *Enhancing capacity*, *increasing efficiency*, *empowering constituents*, and *altering policies or structures*. The framework provided by Marullo et al. (2003) serves as the theoretical background for the current project, which entails capturing community partner perspectives on the ability of university-community partnerships to advance social change goals.

Interviews were conducted with 20 CBO staff members who have served as primary contacts for service learning, research, and evaluation projects with university students, faculty/instructors, and/or staff members. From the phenomenological analysis of the qualitative data, clustered respondents' statements into categories of common narratives resulted. The following five content areas served to categorize the data: (1) experiences associated with enhancing or not enhancing capacity, (2) experiences associated with increasing or not increasing efficiency, (3) experiences associated with improving or not improving the ability to empower constituents, (4) experiences associated with improving or not improving the ability to alter policies or structures, and (5) perceptions of the ideal partnership. The first four content

areas, derived from Marullo et al. (2003), were examined according to individual, organizational, and community level effects and processes. Challenges to achieving social change goals were also examined. The fifth content area was grouped into perceptions of ideal characteristics and perceptions of ideal structures.

Capacity-related effects included factors related to CBO staff, constituents, and university students; new organizational communication, resources, and practices; and increasing presence, and understanding as well as building a stronger community. Processes included meetings and trainings and partnership logistics.

Efficiency-related effects included factors related to CBO staff and constituents; better use of time and money as well as improved organizational practices; and enhanced service delivery and youth outreach within the community. Processes were identified as CBO logistics and university-driven operations improvement.

Effects related to empowering constituents included factors related to CBO staff and constituents; meeting organizational objectives and promoting self-reliant practices; and relational development and community support. Processes consisted of meetings and trainings as well as service and community engagement.

Effects related to altering policies included individual perspective change; improved advocacy related to work and policy change; and community change in norms and practices. Processes comprised applied research and university student development.

Ideal partnership characteristics included reciprocity; expanding engagement opportunities; individual student factors; on-campus support; clarity of goals; pipeline of support for constituents; and valuing community knowledge.

Ideal partnership structural elements included alignment; meetings, trainings, and orientations; student recruitment, management, and evaluation; and incentives, activities, and relationships to deepen community-university connections.

Findings from this study carry implications for understanding the multidirectional nature of partnerships, building on critiques of engagement models, and developing partnership evaluation and assessment. The present examination aims to inform, influence, and inspire present and future practices that draw universities and CBOs into more authentic partnership to produce positive social outcomes for youth, families, and communities at large.

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Appendix A

RECRUITMENT MATERIALS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Overview:
We will contact representatives from community-based organizations that have historically worked with the Steans Center and Egan Urban Center by email and ask our main contact(s) to participate in an interview (which can either be conducted over the phone or in-person, depending on the preference of the community partner).

Email:
Subject: Your Participation is Requested: Perspectives on Partnership with DePaul University

Dear <NAME>,

Within the past ten years, your community-based organization has partnered with DePaul University's Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning and/or Egan Urban Center for various projects involving DePaul students, faculty, and staff. We are conducting interviews with our community partners for research purposes. This research will enable us to learn more about your perspective of the partnership between your community-based organization and DePaul University. Your insights will help us understand and improve upon our community-centered approaches to learning, engagement, and collaboration.

We invite you to participate in an interview that will take about one hour. Based on your preference, the interview can be conducted over the phone or in-person. The interview will be audio-recorded. Your responses will remain confidential and only de-identified, transcribed data will be used for the research study. The study has been reviewed and approved by the DePaul University Institutional Review Board.

See below for the Information Sheet, which contains additional information about the research.

Please let us know if you are willing to participate in this project. You may contact Liezl Alcantara (773.325.2268 or lalcant1@depaul.edu) to schedule a time for your interview. We are grateful for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Liezl Alcantara, M.A.
Ph.D. Student, Department of Psychology

Gary Harper, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Psychology
Director, Master of Public Health Program

Study Investigators, DePaul University

Appendix A (continued)

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

COMMUNITY PARTNER PERSPECTIVES OF COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Liezl Alcantara, a graduate student at DePaul University, as a requirement to obtain her Doctorate degree. This research is being supervised by her faculty advisor, Gary Harper, Ph.D. We are asking you because we are trying to learn more about community-university partnerships. This study will take about one hour of your time. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete an interview either over the phone or in-person (based on your preference). We will audio-record the interview conversations so that we can make accurate notes regarding what you have said. We will not include your name in the written transcripts.

The interview will include questions about your perspective of the partnership between your community-based organization and DePaul University. You can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind later. Your decision whether or not to be in the research will not affect your relationship with the Steans Center or the Egan Urban Center. There are no risks associated with providing negative feedback about your experience. You are free to stop the interview at any time or choose not to answer any questions.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Liezl Alcantara, 773.325.2268, lalcant1@depaul.edu or Gary Harper, Ph.D., 773.325.2056, gharper@depaul.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Protections at 312.362.7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

You may keep this information for your records.

Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS RESEARCH STUDY

<Hand out and read Information Sheet to participant>

<Read the following>

The purpose of this interview is to learn about your perspective of the partnership between your community-based organization and DePaul University. Your insights will help us understand and improve upon our community-centered approaches to learning, engagement, and collaboration. All of your comments will remain confidential.

I will ask you questions focusing on these two topics: (1) How participation in partnership with DePaul University has influenced your community-based organization (CBO) and (2) How you perceive the ideal partnership between your CBO and universities.

Do you have any questions?

This conversation is being audio-recorded for research purposes. Please let me know now if you do not agree to being recorded. You may request that the recording stop at any time.

I will now begin recording.

<Start recording equipment>

I will start with basic demographic questions to learn more about you and your CBO.

MISSION	What is the mission of your CBO?
TYPE	What type of organization best describes your CBO? ☐ Community development corporation ☐ Direct/social service ☐ Educational institution ☐ Grassroots community organization ☐ Health/medical organization ☐ Policy/advocacy group or organization ☐ Other _____
SIZE	What is the size of your CBO in terms of - Number of staff members? o Full time? o Part time? - (If applicable) Number of individual members, organizations/member institutions? - Number of volunteers? - Number of clients served per year?

BUDGET	What is the budget of your CBO? ☐ Under $50,000 ☐ $500,000-1 million ☐ $50,000-250,000 ☐ over $1 million ☐ $250,000-500,000
LOCATION	What is location of where services are provided?
POSITION/JOB TITLE	What is your position/job title within the CBO?
YEARS WITH AGENCY	How many years have you worked for the CBO?

Next, I will ask basic questions to learn more about your partnership with DePaul University.

CBO-DEPAUL	How many years has the CBO worked with DePaul?
PARTICIPANT-DEPAUL	How many years have you (personally) worked with DePaul?
PARTNERSHIP WITH DEPAUL PARTNERSHIP WITH DEPAUL (CONTINUED)	Tell me about your partnership with DePaul. - Steans or Egan? - Please describe the partnership. - Please describe the contracts and agreements associated with the partnership. - Would you describe your partnership has a past partnership or a current partnership? - *<If past partnership>* Were your expectations met? OR *<If current partnership>* Are your expectations being met? - Why or why not?
	Is there anything else that would help me to understand your partnership before I go on to more specific questions?

Now we will move on to more specific questions about what has occurred as a result of your partnership with DePaul.

First, I'd like to you to tell me about ways in which your CBO's **capacity has or has not been enhanced** as a result of your partnership with DePaul.

<Ask questions below – probe for clarification and follow-up, if necessary>

(1) Before we get started, please define what **enhancing capacity** means to you.

(2) Some people define **enhancing capacity** as increasing skills, resources, or attributes of a particular group of individuals; increasing an organization's ability to deliver more and better resources.

    a. Based on this definition, please describe your experiences associated with **enhancing capacity** as a result of the university partnership.

    (What are the ways in which the partnership has helped, hurt, didn't help, or didn't hurt your CBO's **capacity**? What are ways in which the partnership has influenced your CBO by **enhancing or not enhancing capacity**? Tell me about specific ways in which the partnership has or has not resulted in your CBO increasing skills or resources. Tell me about specific ways in which the partnership has or has not increased your CBO's ability to deliver more and better resources.)

        i. What are the **effects** of these experiences associated with **capacity**?
            1. What are the effects at the individual level? (How has the partnership influenced individuals involved?)
            2. What are the effects at the agency/organizational level? (How has the partnership influenced the agency/organization?)
            3. What are the effects at the community level? (How has the partnership influenced the community?)

        (What have been the desired or undesired outcomes associated with **enhancing or not enhancing capacity** achieved through partnership with universities? What do these outcomes look like on an individual level? What do these outcomes look like on an organizational level? What do these outcomes looks like on a community level?)

        ii. What are the **processes** through which these experiences associated with **capacity** have occurred?

        (What have been the operations, mechanisms, or activities associated with **enhancing or not enhancing capacity** experienced as a result of university partnership? How have the influences occurred?)

Next, I'd like to you to tell me about the ways in which your CBO's **efficiency has or has not increased** as a result of partnership with DePaul University.

<Ask questions below – probe for clarification and follow-up, if necessary>

(3) Please define what **increasing efficiency** means to you.

(4) Some people define **increasing efficiency** as an organization utilizing its current resources more effectively to deliver on its promised objectives.

a. Based on this definition, please describe your experiences associated with **increasing efficiency** as a result of the university partnership.

(What are the ways in which the partnership has helped, hurt, didn't help, or didn't hurt your CBO's **efficiency**? What are ways in which the partnerships has influenced your CBO by **increasing or not increasing efficiency**? Tell me about specific ways in which the partnership has resulted in your CBO utilizing its current resources more effectively to deliver on objectives.)

    i. What are the **effects** of these experiences associated with **efficiency**?
        1. What are the effects at the individual level? (How has the partnership influenced individuals involved?)
        2. What are the effects at the agency/organizational level? (How has the partnership influenced the agency/organization?)
        3. What are the effects at the community level? (How has the partnership influenced the community?)

        (What have been the desired or undesired outcomes associated with **increasing efficiency** achieved through partnership with universities? What do these outcomes look like on an individual level? What do these outcomes look like on an organizational level? What do these outcomes looks like on a community level?))

    ii. What are the **processes** through which these experiences associated with **efficiency** have occurred?

        (What have been the operations, mechanisms, or activities associated with **increasing or not increasing efficiency** experienced as a result of university partnership? How have the influences occurred?)

Next, I'd like to you to tell me about the ways in which your CBO's **ability to empower constituents has or has not been positively influenced** as a result of partnership with DePaul University.

<Ask questions below – probe for clarification and follow-up, if necessary>

(5) Please define what **empowering constituents** means to you.

(6) Some people define **empowering constituents** as empowering particular groups of people so that they are better skilled, experienced, informed, and organized to achieve the goals they determine for themselves.

    a. Based on this definition, please describe your experiences associated with your CBO's **ability to empower constituents** as a result of the university partnership.

(What are the ways in which the partnership has helped, hurt, didn't help, or didn't hurt your CBO's **ability to empower constituents**? Tell me about specific ways in which the partnership has or has not resulted in your CBO's improved **ability to empower constituents**.)

    i. What are the **effects** of these experiences associated with the **ability to empower constituents**?
        1. What are the effects at the individual level? (How has the partnership influenced individuals involved?)
        2. What are the effects at the agency/organizational level? (How has the partnership influenced the agency/organization?)
        3. What are the effects at the community level? (How has the partnership influenced the community?)

        (What have been the desired or undesired outcomes associated with the **ability to empower constituents** achieved through partnership with universities? What do these outcomes look like on an individual level? What do these outcomes look like on an organizational level? What do these outcomes looks like on a community level?)

    ii. What are the **processes** through which these experiences associated with the **ability to empower to constituents** have occurred?

        (What have been the operations, mechanisms, or activities associated with your CBO's **ability to empower constituents** experienced as a result of university partnership? How have the influences occurred?)

Next, I'd like to you to tell me about the ways in which your CBO's **ability to alter policies or structures** has or has not been positively influenced as a result of partnership with DePaul University.

(7) Please define what **altering policies or structures** means to you.

(8) Some people define **altering policies or structures** as changing institutional operations or power relations to improve the life chances of the disadvantaged.

    a. Based on this definition, please describe your experiences associated with your CBO's **ability to alter policies or structures** as a result of the university partnership.

    (What are the ways in which the partnership has helped, hurt, didn't help, or didn't hurt your CBO's **ability to alter policies or structures**? Tell me about specific ways in which the partnership has or has not resulted in your CBO's improved **ability to alter policies or structures**.)

    i. What are the **effects** of these experiences associated with the **ability to alter policies or structures**?
1. What are the effects at the individual level? (How has the partnership influenced individuals involved?)
2. What are the effects at the agency/organizational level? (How has the partnership influenced the agency/organization?)
3. What are the effects at the community level? (How has the partnership influenced the community?)

(What have been the desired or undesired outcomes associated with the **ability to alter policies or structures** achieved through partnership with universities? What do these outcomes look like on an individual level? What do these outcomes look like on an organizational level? What do these outcomes looks like on a community level?)

    ii. What are the **processes** through which these experiences associated with the **ability to alter policies or structures has improved**?

(What have been the operations, mechanisms, or activities associated with the **ability to alter policies or structures** experienced as a result of university partnership? How have the influences occurred?)

Now, I'd like to ask you about your perceptions of the ideal partnership between your community-based organization and universities. Imagine what this partnership might look like and how it might operate.

<Ask questions below – probe for clarification and follow-up, if necessary>

(9) What are **characteristics** of the ideal partnership? What are the specific elements that would make the partnership work?

(10) What would the **structure** ('mechanics') look like? How would the ideal partnership be set up?

Thank you for your responses. Is there anything else you would like to share in terms of the influences that your partnership with DePaul has had on your CBO or your perceptions of the ideal community-university partnership?

We are grateful for your time and insights. Thank you again for your participation in this study.