

11-2018

Deliberation and Dialogue in a Quiet Place

Roger A. Lohmann

West Virginia University, roger.lohmann@mail.wvu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/faculty_publications

 Part of the [Community-Based Research Commons](#), [Leadership Studies Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Digital Commons Citation

Lohmann, Roger A., "Deliberation and Dialogue in a Quiet Place" (2018). *Faculty Scholarship*. 768.
https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/faculty_publications/768

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Research Repository @ WVU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of The Research Repository @ WVU. For more information, please contact ian.harmon@mail.wvu.edu.

Dialogue and Deliberation in a Quiet Place¹

Roger A. Lohmann
West Virginia University

Morgantown West Virginia is a quiet place. Not a large urban center, it is also quiet in a peculiar deindustrialized “rust belt” sense: the former manufacturing and mining activities have closed or moved away, leaving an eerie silence and a number of brownfield and strip mine sites. Morgantown is in the only one of the United States completely within the Appalachian region, all of which can accurately be characterized as politically quiescent (Edelman 1971; Gaventa 1980). Citizens there are fairly complacent and compliant, although subject to periodic bouts of populist rage like that of the 2016 “God, gays and guns” outburst.

Morgantown is the home of West Virginia University, a university town without the traditions of European towns like Oxford, Heidelberg or Pecs, or the traditions of civic activism of Berkeley, California, Madison, Wisconsin or Ann Arbor, Michigan. The vast majority of students at West Virginia University are first-generation college attenders, who typically work multiple jobs and borrow heavily to finance their educations. Many of these students come from families and communities in the Appalachian region with strong traditions of political alienation and inefficacy, dating in some cases, to immigrant grandparents and great-grandparents, who arrived from Europe in pursuit of the jobs in coal mining and manufacturing. They know their place and they don’t rock the boat.

The central concern of this case study is an analysis of a decade-long, ultimately unsuccessful effort (2001-2011) to overcome political quiescence through a program of education, outreach and university-community relations centered on public deliberation and sustained dialogue. It is a case of community engagement that was successful in the short run but failed in the long run for several reasons, including lack of available financial resources and depletion of social capital and an unprecedented “perfect storm” of faculty and administrative conflict. In the first decade of the 21st century, the circumstances that led to the tandem Trump and Sanders populisms of 2016 were already turning West Virginia from one of the most progressive, grassroots labor-oriented states in the U.S. into a staunchly conservative one.

¹ To appear in **Universities in Their Communities**. A. Kövér-Van Til and G. Franger, Eds. Budapest: Central European University Press. 2019.

Background

At no time in its political history has the fabric of American political community been more in tatters than in the 1862-63 period that saw both the formation of the state of West Virginia and the Congressional adoption of the first Morrill Act (7 U.S.Code § 301). The intrepid Scotch-Irish and German farmers of the rural region of western Virginia chose to secede from the Confederate State of Virginia and rejoin the United States of America as the new state of West Virginia. Similar sentiments in the mountainous regions of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina failed to yield similar results (Inscoc and McKinney 2000).

The second development, unrelated to the first, was Congressional adoption of the first Morrill Act. (A second Morrill Act came in 1890). The purpose of the 1862 act was to establish a network of state universities for the teaching of scientific agriculture, military science, physical science and engineering, albeit without excluding the classical studies that were the backbone of traditional European universities. Implementation of the act was unique: rather than money (of which the 19th century U.S. government was always notably short), the law called for the awarding of grants of land to each state, the sales of which could be expected to finance the creation and operation of state universities.

Much of the 20th century in West Virginia was riven by economic exploitation by outsiders and internal labor and management conflicts, first in the timber industry and later in coal mining. In the U.S. labor movement, the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) formed the political backbone of the state for many decades.¹ Today, West Virginia is a small state with a total population of 1.8 million. Distilled from this unique history and geography are important and enduring cleavages. Southern WV cities have much in common with Virginia, the Carolinas, Kentucky and Tennessee, while northern WV cities have greater affinity to Pittsburgh, Cleveland and the industrial Midwest, and those in the eastern panhandle are within the orbit of Washington DC.

In this context, West Virginia University, with its 30,000 students, roughly 200 academic programs, and “flying WV” logo remains one of the most powerful unifying forces and symbols in a state characterized by such differences. Located near the extreme northern border, West Virginia University (WVU) is the oldest and few durable statewide institutions with a long history of community outreach grounded in

its land grant mission.

The Land Grant Mission

An important academic theory of university-community relations is built into the very fabric of WVU and other land-grant institutions in the United States. Like communities, modern universities are complex, multi-dimensional organizations (Siemens 2012). The mission statement of WVU speaks of a triparted mission of teaching, research and service. In physics or micro-biology, for example, much of the service mission may involve internal organization activities subordinate to their research or teaching programs. In agriculture, education, social work, public health, public administration, law and medicine, and some arts and sciences, service includes direct, explicit programs of community service. Service translates directly into the workloads of all faculty. Forty percent teaching (2 days a week), 40% research (2 days) and 20% service (1 day) is a typical workload for regular, tenured faculty. The state's extension service established under the second Morrill Act has staff in all 55 counties of the state (7 U.S. Code § 32).

The theory of the land-grant university was fashioned out of the international scientific agriculture movement in the 19th century. Even as individual naturalists and conservationists like Isaac Walton in Great Britain, and John P. Norton and Samuel W. Johnson in the U.S. were advancing the science of agriculture, the first Morrill Act was institutionalized the integrated study, practice and education of scientific agriculture in the newly established land-grant universities. The second Morrill Act institutionalized a national system of university-based community service. Since that time, additional models of community and public service have taken root in land-grant institutions, in law, business, education, social work and public administration. New tenure-track faculty at WVU are expected to establish "records of excellence" in teaching and research, and "perform satisfactorily" in service. Those at the rank of professor have the option of continuing the pursuit of research and scholarly activity or concentrating on teaching and service. Service in some disciplines means merely providing *institutional service* in the form of mutual aid and self-help with institutional housekeeping tasks. In other cases, service means emphasis on public and *community service*, including a particular local adaptation called "service to the state" (which includes service to the people and communities of West Virginia, and not just

the political state).

Community service

In the first decade of the 21st century, the service mission of WVU encompassed a vast range of activities. Social work, education, public administration, pharmacy, medicine and several other disciplines have long-standing internship or “field placement” programs in which education and community service are directly tied together. Students spent periods (usually at least one semester) in community practice as a required part of their degree programs. The School of Law operates a legal clinic in which third year law students and faculty handle actual *pro bono* legal cases. Economists in the Regional Research Institute and the College of Business and Economics routinely prepare and distribute economic data for the state government and businesses operating in the state.

In addition, individual senior faculty - including some of the most prolific and active scholars and researchers at the institution - establish their own community service programs, outreach and initiatives. A history professor specializing in Appalachian history regularly published articles on the logging and mining industries of the state for popular magazines, served on the state humanities council and advised on documentary films on Appalachia. Another historian conducted oral history interviews with survivors of mining and other disasters – offering important additions to public memory and incidentally an important form of therapy for victims, family and community members.

A social work professor with an interest in community health established an orientation program, in which he took carloads of new faculty to communities throughout the state and introduce them to local community leaders. An interdisciplinary group of faculty working with two state human service agencies established a summer institute on aging that annually offers a week of training opportunities for several hundred human service workers in the state. Faculty in the College of Engineering studying the physical and chemical effects of deindustrialization subsequently formed a Brownfields Assistance Center that presents restoration workshops for community leaders.

An English professor collected thousands of used books and distributed them to prisoners in regional jails and prisons. A faculty member in the Theater department who specialized in puppetry acquired a donated van (christened the “Puppet Mobile”)

and presents *pro bono* puppet shows at elementary and middle schools around the state. A microbiologist in the College of Agriculture and international expert on chestnut blight advises land-owners with surviving groves of American chestnut trees on how to protect and defend them, and was a founder of the International Chestnut Association.

Such group and individual efforts are not unique to WVU. They are characteristic of most land grant institutions and represent an important and distinct dynamic of university-community relations. More controversial are those individual and group service activities that involve advocacy or engage controversial topics. At one time, there was strong pressure from the coal industry on medical researchers at WVU engaged in studying the causes and pathology of pneumoconiosis (or “black lung disease”). Recently, a professor of law has faced pressure from a local hauling business for his advocacy of weight limits on trucks.

Whether controversial or not, however, the public and community service mission of WVU is a profoundly important institutional characteristic that sets part of the backdrop for this case study. This is a study of one such effort led by a professor of social work with more than 30 years of university-community involvement and a growing concern about the sense of alienation, powerlessness and lack of political efficacy in local communities. It was also an effort to better integrate faculty from five social science disciplines – social work, public administration, sociology, anthropology and archeology thrown together in a new academic unit by the central administration.

Structural changes

The establishment and dissolution of the Nova Institute at WVU is framed within the backdrop of the creation in 2000, twelve-year lifespan and dissolution after 2011 of a multi-disciplinary teaching, research and service unit named the School of Applied Social Sciences. For its first three years, the unit consisted only of two disciplines and was known as the School of Public Administration and Social Work (SPASW). With the addition of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology – itself an amalgam of sociologists, anthropologists and a lone archeologist – the name School of Applied Social Sciences (SASS) was agreed upon, in part to emphasize the community and public service orientation of the disciplines involved. It was never popular among the

least community-oriented faculties. Each of the units within the school was termed a division.

This new School of Applied Science provided a nurturing environment for most of the events described below. There are several reasons the central administration elected to create this multi-disciplinary school. Aside from the familiar litany of saving costs and greater efficiencies, the principal publicly-cited reason was the two-decade history of a Master of Social Work (MSW) - Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree program that was established in 1980 and continues in operation today. The program was and remains small but durable, producing 2-5 graduates each year for more than three decades. This interdisciplinary program was interpreted as evidence for a convergence of interests sufficient to justify the establishment of the School of Applied Social Sciences, even though only one of the two key faculty members involved was actively supportive of the initiative.² The sociologists, anthropologists and archeologist were folded into the mix following a long period of faculty conflict as an alternative to disbanding it. And that experiment worked. When it returned to independent status after 2011, that unit was organizationally stable and launched a new doctoral program.

Ultimately, following the retirement of several key senior faculty members who were supporters of this interdisciplinary school and the appointment of new department chairs, dean, provost and university president, the SASS unit was quietly disbanded to separate Schools of Social Work and Public Administration and a Department of Sociology and Anthropology within the College of Arts and Sciences in 2012.

The Nova Institute

The Nova Institute was founded in 2003 as a multi-disciplinary initiative of SASS, with involvement from junior and senior faculty and students from all divisions. Two of the three divisions had strong, separate and quite different public service traditions. The context was an intellectual and academic environment in which theoretical, academic, and newly established state and national organizations highlighting citizen engagement, discussion and dialogue, and a local political culture in West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania with a long tradition antagonistic to anything other than elite domination of political institutions.

When the Nova Institute was founded, the dual degree program³ and its internships in

community nonprofit organizations became part of the ambit of the institute. In the arts and sciences college where most of the several dozen graduate programs, including sociology/anthropology were small (< 10 students) and masters programs were generally viewed as intermediate steps between baccalaureate and doctoral degree programs and had no community service requirements. This disparate tradition proved to be a hotbed of tensions in the new institute since SASS became the locale of two terminal master's degree programs which together had nearly 500 graduate students all of whom had internship requirements in order to complete their degrees.

A core group of faculty members in all three units was committed to making the merger work, and saw collaborative community effort as a way to do so.⁴ In the third division, support came only from two untenured Assistant Professors with community experience, while virtually the entire senior faculty was passive or opposed to the Nova experiment.

The mission of the Nova Institute was to create a center of excellence in research, teaching and service in public deliberation and sustained dialogue. The deliberation and dialogue focus grew from a number of sources: a required graduate seminar for social work students; a climate of growing national interest in citizen participation, civil society and social capital; and familiarity with a variety of models and university-community collaborations in Northern Ireland, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and the U.S.

The Graduate Seminar

The initial impetus for the Nova experiment in public deliberation during the period 2001-2003 came from changes in a graduate seminar in social policy required of all MSW students in social work. Social policy teaching in U.S. social work education is based heavily on a technocratic applied social science model which emerged from the Heller School at Brandeis University in the late 1960s. The Heller School model places strong emphasis on the use of social science research findings and the expertise of social scientists in the formation of policy. This approach is traceable ultimately to the ideas of Richard Titmuss of the London School of Economics and other British scholars of social administration (Mishra 2002). The resulting social work educational model assumes that social work students should learn social policy as a prelude to becoming policy practitioners engaged in shaping and reforming the welfare state - activists in service organizations, interest and advocacy groups who are

knowledgeable in legislative and judicial change, and involved in bureaucratic decision-making shaping and implementing policy. It spread in U.S. social work as part of a wave of activism in the wake of the civil rights movement.

My doctoral work was at the Heller School in the early 1970s, but after more than 30 years of teaching this approach, I had come to question its appropriateness for social work students in West Virginia and Appalachia (Lohmann 2008). Graduates from WVU routinely took jobs in small nonprofit direct services organizations where many remained and eventually moved into administrative and leadership positions in community nonprofit services and public agencies. Few of them ever had opportunities for involvement in legislation, judicial advocacy or other elements of the “policy change” model. More importantly, most of them came into class with a strong sense of powerlessness and the course did little to change that. So in reaction to the civil society revolution of the early 1990s, I began to explore alternatives, grounded in citizen participation, deliberative democracy, the theories of Jürgen Habermas (1984), the Kettering Foundation and other civil society models and influences.⁵ In the decade after 2000, social capital and social enterprise had come to play a central role and, as they evolved the Nova Institute was fashioned as a social enterprise built on social capital.

Many of the students in my graduate policy seminar – including those who verbalized the strongest sense of powerlessness – were first-generation college students, who came from families and communities in Appalachia with strong traditions of political alienation and inefficacy. They had learned this in closely monitored, rural mining communities from parents, community leaders and immigrant grandparents and great-grandparents who arrived from Europe in pursuit of jobs in coal mining and manufacturing that have since moved abroad. Even after the demise of the company towns by the 1950s, it remained understood that it was unwise to speak out or act against community leaders within the closely woven network of corporate and community interests. Most students expressed a strong sense of the differences between “us” (the powerless) and “them” (the powerful) and deep layers of resentment, frustration and anger which a seminar focused on civic engagement brought to the fore. More recently, this sense of alienation and resentment has spilled onto center stage in West Virginia politics and nationally in the Trump and Sanders Presidential campaigns of 2016. You just don’t get it, students would tell me. We

have no opportunities to make policy as you say we should. “They” (an amorphous group that included mine owners, union bosses, company officials, politicians, police and other unseen forces who control our lives) won’t let us! Although there was a strong sense of family and community history, there was no apparent realization among these students that as graduate professionals they would soon be joining “them” – the community leaders in their rural communities and small towns they aspired to return to.

What was missing was a fundamental sense of active citizen leadership like that found in the land grant policy tradition. As I later summarized the course it became “a graduate social policy course at West Virginia University that confronts the decline of the liberal welfare state and the rise of populist radicalism through civic engagement by citizen-professionals” (Lohmann 2008). This approach proved highly popular with graduate social work students, in no small part because for many of them the new opportunity to voice their own opinions on public issues and common concerns was a novel experience. The revised course gradually became the new norm. The course went statewide, offered in as many as seven sections on the main campus in Morgantown and four off-campus centers. This proved to be the real, albeit unofficial, launch of the Nova Institute. The woman who became the Associate Director of the Nova Institute was originally a student in the course and the dual degree program, and most of those who taught the course later became involved in workshops, meetings and other activities of the Nova Institute.

Strategy

After a period of preliminary reviews and approvals, the Nova Institute initiative was officially announced in 2003. Three strategic features of the Nova Institute mission are worth comment. The project was highly collaborative and sometimes burdened by conflicting strategic visions. At the time, the university’s central administration and the college had disparate expectations from the vision of the founding faculties. Central administration sought only another grant-generating research center. The administration of the new school was interested in an integrative tool to bring faculty and students from the separate divisions closer together. The core faculty of the Nova project was primarily interested in interdisciplinary collaboration and opportunities for university-community relations. These different approaches and expectations served as backdrop for getting the new institute off the ground.

The first step was a strategy called “the big tent” in which we sought to accommodate as many faculty and student interests as possible. It was clear from the start that the Nova Institute emphasis on public deliberation and sustained dialogue would only be partial, and would necessarily exclude some faculty and student interests. In particular, although the project was housed in the Division of Social Work and funded initially by surplus revenues generated by that division’s off-campus programs, clinical or direct practice faculty in social work had little interest in discussion of public issues.⁶ This left out a majority of the social work faculty and about a third of the total school faculty. This lacuna was offset by the most senior clinical faculty member at the time, a family therapist with strong international interests who saw Nova Institute public deliberation as a way to discuss establishment of an educational outreach program in Vietnam and Cambodia. From a base in the Nova Institute and with no obvious ties to the course initiative discussed above, the big tent rubric allowed him to establish a second front for the Nova Institute. That initiative like other Nova Institute efforts continues at this writing. One of the more intriguing aspects of university-community initiatives is the way that efforts can sometimes morph into new, unplanned and unanticipated directions, which at the same time reinforce the relevance of the new initiative.

Another senior clinical faculty member was temporarily and instrumentally interested in public discussion for a time, in conjunction with her research and advocacy efforts addressing a critique of the state mental health system. A number of student public deliberation projects were conducted under her supervision. Both of these clinical faculty participated in the Northern Ireland trip discussed below, when another possible approach to encompassing clinical practice in a deliberative strategy revealed itself.

Another strategic theme was the effort to use the broad umbrella of nonprofit organization, voluntary action and philanthropy as a unifying theme to bring together faculty research, teaching and service interests in the West Virginia community under a single umbrella mission. The logic was simple: All docents have publication, teaching and service obligations. The Nova Institute might provide some minimal coordination of these efforts in order to create some “whole is greater than the sum of its parts” synergy. Public deliberation and sustained dialogue programs offer one

program, but also a pathway to identifying and exploring others. This strategy proved ineffective in the short run against entrenched faculty interests and academic silos: A collaborative approach was not to be. Despite my best efforts and with the exceptions already noted, Nova was seen by other senior faculty as my project, not ours; others would go their own way and chart their own course. Interesting, this often proved as true with community organizations as with campus faculty.

The effort to introduce research, coursework, and service projects on deliberation and dialogue was more successful. One of the most enduring accomplishments of the Nova Institute decade was the publication in 2011 by Columbia University Press of a book of essays by West Virginia University, Rutgers University, Princeton University and faculty and students, and staff from the International Institute on Sustained Dialogue and New Zealand on these themes (Lohmann and Van Til 2011). A close reading of this book – preparation of which began in 2005 – outlines the extent of the Nova outreach at its zenith. Chapters are written by students, faculty and community leaders and discussed deliberative and dialogue efforts on four continents.

A more controversial strategy was the “no grants” social capital approach that evolved out of necessity. The original intent had been to pursue public and foundation funding, but we found no takers. Following the initial awarding of internal SASS funding as “seed money” for an interdisciplinary grant-funded research center, we gradually became aware that such funding was unlikely and an alternative strategy of social entrepreneurship was devised (see Ostrander 2007). University administrators would have preferred that we continue unsuccessful efforts at grant writing or a change of focus to go where funds were available to the strategy that developed, and failure to pursue that futile strategy did cost us some support, although in the end this made little difference.

Social Capital

Once it became clear that major U.S. foundations were moving away from funding civic engagement and government funding sources were unlikely to fund such efforts, a very important shift in resource strategies began to emerge. It became clear that financial support could be acquired in smaller amounts from other sources – most importantly, from fees and tuition for workshops and programs. It also became clear that many of our efforts required no funding. Instead, we could go a long way just by

coordinating and integrating the service obligations of participating faculty (which usually amounted to 20% of their workload, or one day a week), the internship obligations of students, student course assignments and the enthusiasm of community leaders. This became our very own social capital strategy.⁷

My use of social capital in the Nova Institute initiative was deliberate, intentional and came from three distinct sources: The first was the kind of social capital familiar to all senior faculty who have become relatively well-known in their fields and are considered trustworthy working within an institutional setting with which they are familiar. The second came from local knowledge of my scholarly work and expertise, which had been recognized by WVU with an honorific (“distinguished scholar”) and several national awards. This may be, it should be noted, roughly the same source of social capital that got me included among the authors of this book.

My third source of social capital for the Nova venture was somewhat unique, familiar to what is still a relative handful of men. I was married to a high level university administrator, and within the Appalachian power context noted above, others often used this connection to attribute to me unique influence and powers beyond any I actually possessed. Since it was furthering my interest in building the Nova Institute, I was quite willing to let them do so.

People were always assuming that I knew things about institutional directions and decisions that I mostly did not - and when I did know something, I either wasn't especially interested or it would have been harmful or prejudicial to discuss the matter. Social capital cannot be precisely measured like financial capital. Suffice it to say that my situation gave me all of the perquisites of senior faculty at WVU, plus some perceived extra influence associated with my external reputation and my role as administrative spouse.

Finally, I had over the years been engaged in a wide range of community situations – from consulting and training activities with nonprofit organizations statewide to disaster relief efforts, nonprofit board and officer positions, and the like. In a small rural state like West Virginia, it was not unusual to discuss something in class and to receive a phone call a day or two later from someone I knew on the other side of the state indicating “I hear you were talking about (that topic or organization) in class recently ...” Such networks were real, extensive and could be very useful in the social capital context. Most faculty involved in the Nova Institute had similar networks and

could make use of them when needed.

Once I had decided I would be retiring in a few years, the decision to spend as much of my available social capital as I could in a good cause was relatively straightforward. This generally took the form of inviting, persuading, or cajoling others into joining the Nova initiative. A more detailed analysis of social capital in the history of the Nova Institute would reveal a range of other interesting relations and networks.

Corrymeela and Peace Studies

An opportunity to widen the focus on deliberation and dialogue to include clinical social workers arose during a student faculty spring break trip to Northern Ireland, at the Corrymeela Community in Ballycastle, and in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where we attended a community workshop for mental health practitioners on reconciliation⁸. The workshop was for mental health practitioners dealing with the psychological, emotional and mental health aftermath of The Troubles. From that experience, I saw ways of bringing clinical social work faculty into the ambit of the Nova Institute: West Virginia has more than its share of natural and man-made disasters with which individuals, families and entire communities must deal.⁹ The Nova Institute could be grown beyond the focus on discussion of public affairs. Peace studies offered a way to bring deliberation and dialogue into the university curriculum. Unfortunately, this expansion of the Nova mandate was stillborn due to the sudden, rapid demise of the Nova Institute. (Lohmann and Van Til 2011)¹⁰.

Projects, plans and the “perfect storm”

The Nova Institute established liaisons with a variety of related national initiatives in addition to the West Virginia Center for Civic Engagement. One of these was the National Coalition for Deliberation and Dialogue, then just getting established.¹¹ A broad program of continuing education workshops and training events in nonprofit organizations, voluntary action and philanthropy was initiated in 1989 under the rubric of the Nonprofit Management Academy. Beginning around 2003 and continuing for the next decade, a regular series of workshops on public deliberation, sustained dialogue and a range of other discussion, deliberation and dialogue approaches were offered each year. Many of the techniques we used were, at the time, experimental and several have highly selective applications and uses.

Continuing education was an important aspect of the Nova Institute ever since the Institute was established, and out of the Nonprofit Management Academy, we were able to initiate a 100-hour certificate training program for community-based nonprofit administrators. Near the end of its second decade of operation, the training program and certification activities were divested to the Social Work continuing education program where they remain to the present.

One of the notable things about these diverse programs and activities carried out under the Nova Institute umbrella was their multi-disciplinary character: Faculty and students from multiple disciplines, particularly the three core disciplines of the School – social work, public administration and sociology – worked together and with community participants. Another was the experimental nature of some of the activities. With the number of young faculty and students involved, we were not afraid of failing, looking foolish, and sought to learn from our failures. Most of all, we sought synergy – using individual research projects, like several on community foundations, to build for future ventures.

After the School of Applied Social Sciences had been in operation for a decade, and the Nova Institute more than five years, there began what became a “perfect storm” of related and unrelated events which brought this promising initiative to an end.

In 2009-2010 the core group of Nova Institute faculty was seriously diminished because various colleagues and supportive administrators retired or left to other institutions. Thus, in one short period, all of those administrative officials who were most familiar with and supportive of the Nova Institute left and were replaced by new people with no particular knowledge of or support for the program. Perhaps the critical factor in the decline of the Nova Institute was a decision by the new director of social work to disallow the working agreement creating a revenue stream adopted by her predecessor.

Conclusion

What general lessons might be learned from the Nova Institute experience for university-community relations in other quiet places? First, community initiatives originating in universities are likely to have both formal and institutionally sanctioned and informal, individual dimensions, some of which may only be locally recognized or even unknown. In the U.S., the legal environment of the two Morrill Acts created a

century-long tradition of university-community relations in public land grant universities through such institutionalized programs as the Cooperative Extension service.¹² Also, modern land grant universities have nurtured a long tradition of individual initiatives of faculty working with community actors. These include formal internships, field placements and practica and a range of other individual and group collaborations and partnerships. While land grant institutions have formal enabling legislation recognizing these arrangements, the open environment of the modern university means that faculty, student and staff actors in other institutions may also find ways to pursue such partnerships. Formalizing public service as an expected part of faculty workloads creates powerful sanctions for legitimizing the kinds of “third sector” and “civil society” efforts identified by Pestoff, Brandsen & Verschuere (2012), Wagner (2012) and others.

Secondly, pursuit of university-community relations should anticipate the unexpected. There will always be unanticipated effects and consequences that cannot be known in advance but that will have decisive impacts on efforts at university-community relations. This may take the form of readiness for dealing with the unexpected when it occurs, including the ever-present possibility of failure. It was never anyone’s intent that the Nova Institute would dissolve in the way that it did. Yet it happened for the reasons outlined above. It was also not anticipated that, while some parts of the overall program failed others succeeded beyond expectations. The interdisciplinary collaboration that was the School of Applied Social Sciences and the program of deliberation and dialogue had run their course after a single decade. Yet, numerous other ventures including the dual degree program, the continuing education program in nonprofit management, the Vietnam initiative, and the new sociology doctoral program have all survived and are thriving. Likewise, in part because of their experience in the SASS experiment, the School of Public Administration subsequently joined a successful, funded partnership with the Department of Political Science (and became the community-outreach component of) the John D. Rockefeller IV School of Policy and Politics.

At the same time, anyone engaged in pursuit of university-community partnerships should not underestimate the power of disciplinary, organizational and individual interests and cleavages. Terms like “public service” and “community service” mean vastly different things to different groups, professions, disciplines and communities.

As the SASS experience showed, community outreach (and the label applied social science) was seen as positive by two of the three divisions, but very negatively by some sociologists and all of the anthropologists and archeologists who saw themselves as *pure* scientists and were appalled by attempts to characterize them otherwise, or force them into partnership with outsiders. For every effort and commitment supporting interdisciplinary and cross-boundary collaboration and cooperation, there may be other, equally legitimate and sometimes far more powerful, forces supporting division, cleavage and dissent.

Another is the admonition to think big and don't be afraid to fail in community partnerships. In university-community partnerships, as in other domains there are such things as "noble failures". Our efforts toward creating a statewide public discussion network as an outlet for the rage, inefficacy and powerlessness of small town West Virginia and Appalachia may not have been particularly successful, but even the fairly remote possibility of forestalling the current climate of populist fury was worth the effort.

Anyone working in this area will also recognize both the power and the limitations of social capital as a strategic resource in university-community initiatives. Efforts to build trust and networks of social relations across formal institutional boundaries can be a powerful source of enabling resources, even in the absence of more readily available resources. At the same time, trust and networks alone may not be enough. We experienced in the Nova Institute the powerful effects of reliance on the trust of a small core group of faculty and the combined effects of their various networks. We saw the widespread collapse of this system of social capital as the various actors retired or left the institution. Even more dramatically, we saw the sudden and dramatic effects of an adverse administrative decision and a largely unrelated conflict over the presidency that subsumed the entire institution for a period of time.

The Nova Institute might have survived all of the administrative turnover; indeed, it would have been likely to do so with even a modicum of supplemental funding. However, the loss of crucial resources at the very time of widespread retirements, resignations from the core group and the recruitment of new participants certainly made this more difficult. Although the School of Applied Social Sciences is no more, and the Nova Institute is little more than a formal title, a range of its programs, and the initiatives in which Institute partners participated have survived and, from all appearances will continue to do so.

References

- Edelman, Murray J. (1971). *Politics as Symbolic Action; Mass Arousal and Quiescence*. Chicago: Markham Pub. Co.
- Gaventa, John. (1980). *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Inscoc, John C. and Gordon B. McKinney (2000). *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Lohmann, Roger A. (1992). *The Commons: New Perspectives on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lohmann, Roger A. and Van Til, Jon (2011). *Resolving Community Conflicts and Problems: Public Deliberation and Sustained Dialogue*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Mishra, Ramesh (2002) “Review Article: Richard Titmuss and Social Policy.” *Journal of Social Policy* 31/4: 747–52. In: http://www.iupui.edu/~mswd/S505/multimedia/word_doc/Titmuss.pdf . Downloaded 9/20/2016)
- Pestoff, Victor, Alexis Taco Brandsen, and Bram Verschuere (2012). *New Public Governance, the Third Sector and Co-Production*. New York: Routledge.
- Siemens, Lynne. (2012). “The Impact of a University-Community Collaboraton: Opening the Black Box.” *ANSERJ: Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research* 3/ 1. 5 - 25.
- Wagner, Antonin (2012). “Third Sector or Civil Society? A Critical Discourse About Scholarship Relating to Intermediate Institutions.” *Voluntary Sector Review* 3/3: 299–328.

¹Mining employment in West Virginia went from a high of 220,000 jobs in 1940 to under 12,000 in 2016 (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/215786/coal-mining-employment-in-west-virginia/> retrieved 29.4.2018).

²Both of these faculty members retired in 2010-2011.

³A double degree program, sometimes called a dual degree, combined degree, conjoint degree, joint degree, or simultaneous degree program, involves a student's working for two different university degrees in parallel, either at the same institution or at different institutions (sometimes in different countries), completing them in less time than it would take to earn them separately. The two degrees might be in the same subject area (especially when the course is split between countries), or in two different subjects.

⁴It wouldn't be a genuine academic situation if the proposed new unit were not controversial and there were not also "anti-coalition" forces involved. In two of the three divisions, the "pro" group included both senior, tenured faculty and junior, untenured and academic professionals, in particular, those involved in continuing education in the social work unit.

⁵Under President David Matthews the Charles Kettering Foundation, an operating foundation in Ohio has become the leading national voice in the U.S. for public deliberation.

⁶In U.S. social work education, the distinction between clinical, direct practice social work directly with clients and community, indirect practice is a fundamental one.

⁷I won't speak here of the social capital generated by most other participants, largely because it is so difficult to separate the deliberate from the accidental effects of the actions of others. I can speak of my own intentions and actions, however.

⁸A year earlier, Jon Van Til was a Visiting Professor at the School of Applied Social Sciences and we co-organized a study abroad trip to Northern Ireland for faculty and students from West Virginia and Rutgers Universities. Together with colleagues from the University of Ulster and the WVU School of Applied Social Sciences, our group were conducted on a tour and briefing at the center program of the Corrymeala center.

⁹Numerous communities in Southern West Virginia were dealing with serious flooding in the summer of 2016 that destroyed thousands of homes and damaged thousands more, as well as numerous schools and public buildings.

¹⁰This Correymeela initiative stalled out in the year after our return to the U.S.

¹²Extension provides non-formal education and learning activities to people throughout the country — to farmers and other residents of rural communities as well as to people living in urban areas. It emphasizes taking knowledge gained through research and education and bringing it directly to the people to create positive changes.

All universities engage in research and teaching, but in the States's more than 100 land-grant colleges and universities have a third, critical mission - extension. Through extension, land-grant colleges and universities bring vital, practical information to agricultural producers, small business owners, consumers, families, and young people.