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LOCAL ASSETS: LEVERAGING STUDENT DIVERSITY IN LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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The public service mission is cited in the mission statements of a wide variety of higher education institutions.¹ Service to the public is embedded in many university activities, such as the inculcation of civic values through the curriculum and co-curriculum, outreach across geographies and to people historically excluded from higher education, and research that creates useful knowledge and addresses critical social challenges.²

Historically, public universities in the United States have defined the people and communities they serve as those primarily located in their region or state.³ While service to the locality or the state remains a critical imperative that is expressed in mission statements,⁴ others have noted an increased focus on internationalization in the postmodern university.⁵ As central actors in increasingly globalized knowledge economies,⁶ where local concerns often have global dimensions, universities are well positioned to prepare students for an interconnected,

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¹ John C. Scott, *The Mission of the University: Medieval to Postmodern Transformations*, 77 J. HIGHER EDUC. 1, 2 (2006) ("Today's mission statements are often based on the triad . . . mission of the university: teaching, research, and public service."); see Christopher C. Morphew & Matthew Hartley, *Mission Statements: A Thematic Analysis of Rhetoric Across Institutional Type*, 77 J. HIGHER EDUC. 456, 462–63 (2006) (finding a "prevalence" of institution's mission statements include elements relating specifically to "service").

² See generally Scott, *supra* note 1, at 14–16, 29–30 (noting the multiple ways "service" is defined by different institutions).

³ *Id.* at 15 (noting the inherent mission of higher education in the 19th century was "service to the individual of the nation-state").

⁴ Morphew & Hartley, *supra* note 1, at 463, 465.

⁵ Scott, *supra* note 1, at 5; Philip G. Altbach & Jane Knight, *The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities*, 11 J. STUD. INT'L EDUC. 290, 293–95, 302–03 ("Internationalism will remain a central force in higher education.").

⁶ SHEILA SLAUGHTER & GARY RHOADES, *ACADEMIC CAPITALISM AND THE NEW ECONOMY: MARKETS, STATE, AND HIGHER EDUCATION 1* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press 2004).

interdependent world.⁷ For example, international migration is often felt as a local issue, but clearly has global dimensions.⁸ International migration is bringing new people into local communities, which presents new challenges and opportunities in community formation.⁹ As place-based institutions that have relationships in the community, public universities can serve a unique role in assisting communities in their adjustment to these global trends.¹⁰

Community engagement is one of the most common expressions of the public service mission.¹¹ Examples abound of innovative campus programs that offer relevant disciplinary expertise to an important problem in a community setting.¹² Service-learning is distinguished from volunteering by integrating the learning of students with the needs of a community.¹³ One example of service-learning in the local setting from the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) is a clinic at Paul's Place, a Baltimore non-profit that started as a soup kitchen and now offers a variety of social services to the residents of West Baltimore.¹⁴ UMB's School of Nursing runs a community clinic there that provides triage and referrals for clients, while also promoting an interest in

⁷ Nuria Alonso García & Nicholas V. Longo, *Going Global: Re-Framing Service-Learning in an Interconnected World*, 17 J. HIGHER EDUC. OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT 111, 117–18 (2013).

⁸ See Steven Castles, *Migration and Community Formation Under Conditions of Globalization*, 36 INT'L MIGRATION REV. 1143, 1143–44 (2002) (noting that “cross-border population mobility is inextricably linked to the other flows that constitute globalization”).

⁹ *Id.* at 1146–47.

¹⁰ See Rinus Penninx, *Integration: The Role of Communities, Institutions, and the State*, MIGRATION POL'Y INST. (Oct. 1, 2003), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/integration-role-communities-institutions-and-state> (discussing the “interrelated” role institutions play in the integration process between immigrants and the “receiving society”).

¹¹ See Morpheus & Hartley, *supra* note 1, at 462.

¹² See KerryAnn O'Meara, *Graduate Education and Community Engagement*, 113 NEW DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHING & LEARNING 27, 30–40 (2008) (explaining the four phases of incorporating community engagement into doctoral study); Virginia Rowthorn, *Global/Local: What Does It Mean for Global Health Educations and How Do We Do It?*, 81 ANNALS GLOBAL HEALTH 593, 598 (2015) (highlighting the importance of the “study away” movement which allows students to learn globally in a domestic setting via community engagement).

¹³ Robert G. Bringle & Julie A. Hatcher, *Implementing Service Learning in Higher Education*, 67 J. HIGHER EDUC. 221, 222 (1996) (defining service learning as a “credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course conduct, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility”).

¹⁴ Paul's Place opened in 1982 as a soup kitchen and has since grown as a source for a variety of social services and programs for the West Baltimore community. *About Us*, PAUL'S PLACE, <https://paulsplaceoutreach.org/about-us/> (last visited Oct. 20, 2018).

community health work for students.¹⁵ In an example of a UMB global community engagement project, medicine and pharmacy students went to Rwanda to evaluate initiation of anti-retroviral (ART) treatment for HIV and understanding barriers to the World Health Organization's *Treat All* approach.¹⁶ Both programs incorporate a community health lens to understand the health needs of the community, and highlight that the same strategies can be employed in local and global contexts.¹⁷ The idea that a practice employed in a country far away can inspire new approaches to an important problem at home is often an underlying motive for international exchange in higher education.¹⁸

Indeed, the mobility of people across borders is changing the demographic landscape in U.S. communities, and the student body in U.S. higher education.¹⁹ The foreign-born population in the U.S. is projected to increase both in number and in percentage by 2060.²⁰ The student body in U.S. higher education has become more diverse over the past forty years.²¹ International students are increasing in numbers on U.S. university campuses²² and more U.S. university students are

¹⁵ Jonathan Pitts, *At Paul's Place, Partnership with Nursing School Promotes Good Health*, BALT. SUN (June 22, 2014), <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-hs-pauls-place-nursing-20140622-story.html>.

¹⁶ *2017 Rwanda*, UNIV. OF MD. BALT., <http://www.umaryland.edu/global/past-cgei-global-experiences/2017-rwanda/> (last visited Oct. 20, 2018); see "*Treat all*" to End AIDS, WORLD HEALTH ORG. (June 9, 2016), <http://www.who.int/hiv/mediacentre/news/arv-2016-launch/en/>.

¹⁷ See *supra* notes 15-16.

¹⁸ See Terri Kim, *Academic Mobility, Transnational Identity Capital, and Stratification Under Conditions of Academic Capitalism*, 73 HIGHER EDUC. 981, 981-83 (2017) (discussing "academic mobility" as the process by which academics are exposed to "new contexts that can lead to new knowledge creation").

¹⁹ Jason Devine, *Births, Deaths, and Migration Transform Communities*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (Aug. 9, 2017), <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2017/08/changing-nation-demographic-trends.html>; Philip G. Altbach & David Engberg, *Global Student Mobility: The Changing Landscape*, 77 INT'L HIGHER EDUC. 11, 12 (2014).

²⁰ Sandra L. Colby & Jennifer M. Ortman, *Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (Mar. 2015), <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf>.

²¹ *Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds Enrolled in Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions, by Level of Institution and Sex and Race/Ethnicity of Student: 1970 through 2015*, NAT'L CTR. FOR EDUC. STAT. (July 2016), https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_302.60.asp.

²² *Open Doors 2017 Executive Summary*, INST. OF INT'L EDUC., <https://www.iie.org/Why-IIE/Announcements/2017/11/2017-11-13-Open-Doors-2017-Executive-Summary> (last visited Oct. 20, 2018) (finding the number of international students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions increased by 3.4 percent in 2016/17 and compared to a decade ago, there are 85 percent more intentional students); see also *Open Doors, International Student Enrollment Trends, 1948/49-2016/17*, INST. OF INT'L EDUC. (2017), <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Enrollment>.

studying abroad.²³ Scholars are beginning to elaborate on the transnational nature of student identity among international and immigrant students.²⁴ Yet most higher education institutions have not fully leveraged this student diversity as a resource in the development of new community engagement initiatives.²⁵

Students whose life experience has obliged them to navigate multiple cultural contexts between home, work and school environments, or whose own life journey has taken them across national borders have valuable perspective to lend to university engagement with communities domestically and around the world.²⁶ Research on ethnic minorities highlights that uplifting their cultural community is deeply important and meaningful to them.²⁷ International and immigrant students, however, may view their community as one that transcends borders.²⁸

Involving students of diverse cultural backgrounds in the design of educational programs that engage the community has much to recommend it. Tapping into student's networks and cultural knowledge not

²³ *Open Doors 2017 Executive Summary*, INST. OF INT'L EDUC., <https://www.iie.org/Why-IIE/Announcements/2017/11/2017-11-13-Open-Doors-2017-Executive-Summary> (last visited Oct. 20, 2018) (finding the number of U.S. students who studied abroad in 2015/16 increased 3.8 percent from the previous year and 46 percent in the past ten years).

²⁴ Jennifer "J.J." Jang, *Transnational Student Identity Development Through the Cosmopolitan Lens: Benefits and Challenges of Straddling Cultures*, 31 VT. CONNECTION 136, 139 (2010). See Chrystal A. George Mwangi et al., *Examining Intra-racial Dynamics and Engagement Between Native-Born and Foreign-Born Black Collegians in STEM*, 47 J. BLACK STUD. 773, 773 (2016) (discussing how native-born and foreign-born Black students interact in STEM classrooms and the value of "cross-cultural engagement"); Patricia Sánchez & G. Sue Kasun, *Connecting Transnationalism to the Classroom and to Theories of Immigrant Student Adaptation*, 3 BERKELEY REV. EDUC. 71, 79–80 (2012) (noting the importance of using the "lens of transnationalism" to understand the "dynamicity of transnational practices" and its impact on education).

²⁵ Susan Strum et al., *Full Participation: Building the Architecture for Diversity and Community Engagement in Higher Education*, 17 IMAGINING AM. 1, 10 (2011).

²⁶ See Hsiao-ping Wu et al., *International Student's Challenges and Adjustment to College*, 2015 EDUC. RES. INT'L 1, 8 (2015) (concluding that US students and faculty "should be aware of the value of embracing international students and appreciating the diversity from each other").

²⁷ *Id.*; Sharon L. Fries-Britt et al., *Lessons from High-Achieving Students of Color in Physics*, 148 NEW DIRECTIONS FOR INST. RES. 75, 78–79 (2010); Sylvia Hurtado et al., *Enacting Diverse Learning Environments: Improving the Climate for Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education*, 26 ASHE HIGHER EDUC. REP., no. 8, 1999, at v.

²⁸ See Jennifer M. Phelps, *International Doctoral Students' Navigations of Identity and Belonging in a Globalizing University*, 11 INT'L J. DOCTORAL STUD. 1, 1–15 ("The study found that international doctoral students experienced multiplicity, ambiguity, and flux in their senses of self, belonging, and educational purposes as they engaged in the transnational academic and social spaces of the university."); Taiye Selasi, *Don't Ask Where I'm From, Ask Where I'm a Local*, TED (Oct. 2014), https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_local (discussing the multilayered aspect of identity identification).

only presents the possibility of new initiatives, it furthers the development of cultural competencies that are necessary for living in a diverse, multicultural society²⁹ and affirms for students of color and international students that their culture's ways of knowing are valued in our curriculum.³⁰ Meaningfully involving international and immigrant students in community engagement initiatives globally provides an opportunity for students to connect their learning with their passion to do good for their community, while also facilitating their positioning as local experts and partners who can work to redress systemic inequities in their community.³¹

Efforts to leverage student diversity in support of community engagement initiatives could take many forms. With data about the national origins of international and immigrant students, country interest groups could be formed on a campus with the goal of identifying student networks abroad that could be utilized in support of international partnerships. Another option would be to bring together faculty, students and administrators to identify issues of importance to the local community, and identify global locations where such issues could be studied.³² Finally, creating opportunities for diverse cohorts of students to become involved in a local community engagement initiative can create global learning at home.³³ International and immigrant students who have spent time living in another country often have a unique perspective on the challenges present in a local setting.³⁴ Alternatively, service learning projects in immigrant communities also offer the opportunity to connect global issues with local settings. Pairing students and community

²⁹ Edna Chun & Alvin Evans, *Rethinking Cultural Competence in Higher Education: An Ecological Framework for Student Development*, 42 ASHE HIGHER EDUC. REP., no. 4, 2016, at 139.

³⁰ Sánchez & Kasun, *supra* note 24, at 81, 84 (noting the importance of teachers "recogniz[ing] [students'] transnationalism" instead of allowing students to "hide their transnational participation" and urging educators to "draw upon students' transnational lives in order to prepare all students for an increasingly globalized world").

³¹ See generally Patricia Gurin et al., *Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes*, 72 HARV. EDUC. REV. 330, 330 (2002) (finding the importance of diversity efforts at universities as a means of "fostering students' academic and social growth").

³² Robert T. Teranishi et al., *Engaging Immigrant-Origin Students in Higher Education*, ASSOC. AM. COLLEGES & U., <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/engaging-immigrant-origin-students-higher-education> (last visited Nov. 30, 2018).

³³ See Richard M. Battistoni et al., *Acting Locally in a Flat World: Global Citizenship and the Democratic Practice of Service-Learning*, 13 J. HIGHER EDUC. OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT 89, 92 (2009) (noting the benefits of learning about "the global by becoming immersed . . . in local communities").

³⁴ See *id.* at 101 (describing how students doing community work with immigrants gained "local wisdom" from these relationships and a greater understanding of immigration in the context of the labor market).

members of a variety of cultural backgrounds and national origins to study an entrenched local problem offers powerful opportunities for learning, with the goal of producing new solutions with the community.³⁵

Developing opportunities for diverse groups of students to engage critically with entrenched societal problems with local and global dimensions is an imperative of a twenty-first century education.³⁶ Local and global community engagement advances higher education's contribution to the public good by producing citizens, professionals and scholars who have the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to improve the human condition and solve social problems.³⁷

³⁵ *Id.* at 93–94 (discussing how a “robust civil society” is built through common local action among diverse students and community members).

³⁶ Alma Clayton-Pedersen & Sonja Clayton-Pedersen, “*Making Excellence Inclusive*” in *Education and Beyond*, 35 PEPP. L. REV. 611, 638 (2008) (noting “cultural diversity” in an educational experience is necessary to “enhance student learning and institutional vitality”).

³⁷ *Id.* at 631–32.