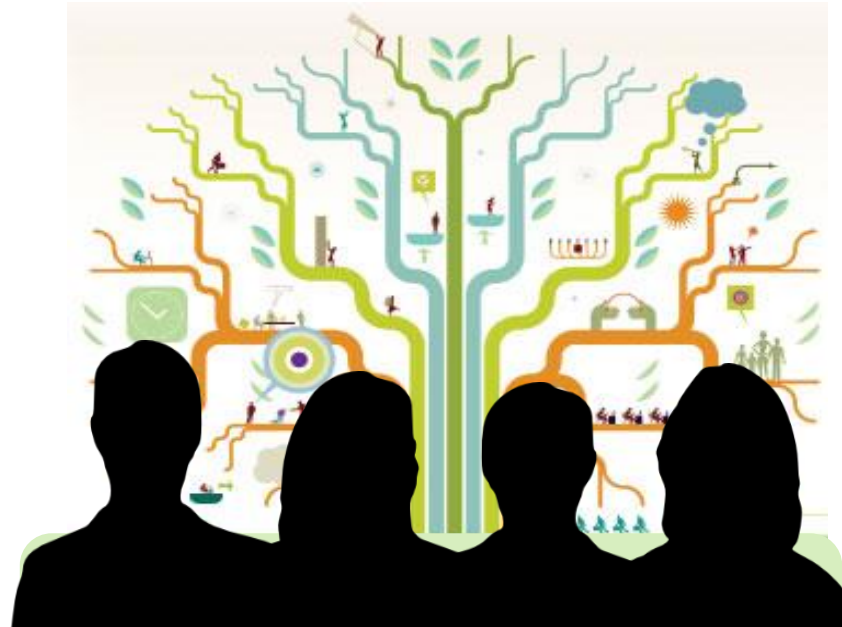# Understanding the 'Why':
A Research Study on Graduate Student Motivations for Public Engagement

Elizabeth Dunens
St. Catherine University/University of Minnesota

Introduction:
Why Graduate Student Motivations?

Absence of literature

Graduate students as next generation of faculty and publicly-engaged scholars

Motivation as "a developmental influence on behavior and personality." (Ford, 1992)

Research Question

What motivates graduate students' involvement in publicly-engaged activity during their graduate tenure?

- Personal and professional dimensions of motivations
- Applicability of frameworks and findings of O'Meara (2008) and Eatman (2012) on faculty and graduate student motivations
- Existence of patterns of motivation based on participants' personal, professional, and academic backgrounds

Conceptual Frameworks

O'Meara's (2008) Typology of Faculty Motivation

	Type of motivation	Prevalence in Ehrlich files	Connection to extant literature
I.	To facilitate student learning and growth	94%	Relates to *individual goals* (Colbeck & Michael 2006; Ford 1992), *intrinsic motivation* (Austin & Gamson 1983)
II.	To achieve disciplinary goals	53%	Relates to *individual goals* that a faculty member may be socialized toward within a discipline; *social knowledge* of expectations of a discipline (Blackburn & Lawrence 1995)
III.	Personal commitments to specific social issues, places, and people	50%	Relates to *individual goals, intrinsic motivation, self-knowledge* (Blackburn & Lawrence), and perhaps also *what can be learned* from partnership (Neumann 2000)
IV.	Personal/ professional identity	60%	Relates to *self-knowledge, individual goals, intrinsic motivation*
V.	Pursuit of rigorous scholarship and learning	44%	Relates to the concept of *self-directed learning* and *what can be learned, individual goals,* and *intrinsic motivation*
VI.	A desire for collaboration, relationships, partners, and public-making	47%	Relates to *individual goals, intrinsic motivation, self-knowledge* and *social knowledge,* and *what can be learned* from partnership
VII.	Institutional type and mission, appointment type, and/or an enabling reward system and culture for community engagement	50%	Relates to *beliefs about the supportiveness of one's contexts* (Colbeck & Michael 2006; Ford 1992), *extrinsic rewards, social knowledge*

Eatman, et. al. (2012) Profiles & Findings

Theories of Motivation

- **Motivation Systems Theory (Ford)**
  - *Motivation = Personal Goals x Personal Agency Beliefs x Emotions*

- **Extrinsic/Intrinsic Dichotomy (Ryan & Deci)**
  - *Extrinsic = Leads to a separable outcome*
  - *Intrinsic = Inherently interesting or enjoyable*

- **Eatman's (2012) findings**
  - *Used to interpret*

Research Design

Instruments

Phase 1: Focus group

- Validation of motivation-related survey items
- Identify motivations not included in frameworks

Phase 2: Online, quantitative survey

- Participants' motivations, demographics, backgrounds & experiences

Sample

Phase 1

- Currently enrolled publicly-engaged graduate students at University of Minnesota
- Invitation to departments across University

Phase 2

- Currently or recently enrolled publicly-engaged graduate students at U.S. institutions
- Affiliation with CCPH, ESW, PAGE, or MSU Community Engagement Certificate Program

Analysis

Phase 1:
◦ Deductive; overlaid O'Meara (2008) & Eatman's (2012) frameworks on data to identify motivations

Phase 2:
◦ Analysis of data in SPSS
  ◦ Frequency distributions and means
  ◦ Reduction and recoding
  ◦ Multivariate analyses; correlation
  ◦ Exploratory factor analysis

Findings: Phase 1

Motivation	O'Meara	Eatman
Public engagement as pedagogy	X	X
Discipline	X	X
Personal Commitment	X	X
Identity	X	X
PES as "cutting edge"	X	X
Value for service & collaboration	X	X
Institutional Support	X	X
Mentoring	N/A	X
Social Justice	N/A	X

Validation of motivation factors

Motivation
Teaching as public engagement
Inst. or external incentives
PES of leaders in discip.
Self-reflection
Purpose to research
Community with other PE Grad. students
Prof. Dev of PES

New factors

Findings: Phase 2

Demographic Information of Participants
Percentage Distribution of Respondents (N = 77)

Discipline	Percentage
Education and Social Sciences	46.8%
Health and Social Care	35.1
Arts and Humanities	10.1
STEM	5.2
Other	2.6

Degree Type	
Academic Ph.D.	61.0
Academic Master's	16.9
Professional Master's	10.4
Professional Doctorate	10.4
Other	1.3

Institution Type	
Public University	83.1
Private University	15.6
For-profit	1.3

Gender	Percentage
Female	80.5%
Male	19.5

Race	
White	57.1
African American	16.9
Hispanic or Latino	10.4
Asian	7.8
2+ ethnicities	7.8

Student Status	
U.S. Student	88.3
International Student	11.7

Personal and Professional Dimensions of Motivation

PROFESSIONAL

- Univ. support of PE
- Graduate advisor
- Univ. affiliated mentor
- PES of leaders in discipline
- Dept. support of PES
- PE workshops/conferences
- Inst./ext. incentives & awards
- Grad. Level PE coursework
- SL benefits students
- Professional identity
- Teaching as PE
- Discipline goals
- PE valued by employers
- PE natural fit for discipline
- PE well-regarded in field

(Intersection)
- Interaction with other PE grad students
- Mentor outside university
- PE facilitates deeper learning
- PE gives purpose to research

PERSONAL

- Specific societal issue
- Value for collaboration
- Value for co-creation of knowledge
- Specific pop. or community
- Value for community work
- Desire to advance social justice
- PE connects academic to personal identity
- PE challenges to self-reflection

Motivations with <50% positive response	Motivations with >90% positive response
37.7% Institutional or external incentives and awards	97.4% Public engagement gives purpose to research
39.0% Department support of public engagement	97.3% Value for community work
45.5% Public engagement is facilitated by university-community relationship	96.1% Public engagement is significant to professional identity
46.8% University support of public engagement	93.5% Public engagement facilitates deeper learning of discipline
	93.5% Public engagement challenges to self-reflection

Comparison of motivations with lowest (<50%) and highest (>90%) positive responses.

Applicability of Frameworks

Type of motivation	Prevalence in O'Meara's sample	Prevalence in Phase II sample
I. To facilitate student learning & growth	94%	66.2%
II. To achieve disciplinary goals	53%	83.1%
III. Personal commitments to specific social issues, places, and people	50%	Social issue: 83.1% Specific population or community: 85.7%
IV. Personal/professional identity	60%	Personal identity: 89.5% Professional identity: 96.1%
V. Pursuit of rigorous scholarship and learning	44%	Learning: 93.5% PES well-regarded in field: 59.7%
VI. A desire for collaboration, relationships, partners, and public-making	47%	Collaboration: 87.0% Co-creation of knowledge: 84.4% Community work: 97.3%
VII. Institutional type and mission, appointment type, and/or an enabling reward system and culture for community engagement	50%	University support: 46.8% Department support: 39.0% Graduate PE coursework: 61.0% University-community relationship: 45.5%

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Category of Motivation	Survey Items		Cronbach's Alpha
1. Institutional & Field Support of Public Engagement	11d	University-wide support of publicly-engaged work	.813
	11e	Encouragement from my graduate advisor	
	11g	Encouragement from University-affiliated mentor (non-adv.)	
	11j	Departmental support of publicly-engaged work	
	11o	Experience with graduate-level coursework involving community-based research or other forms of public engagement	
	12g	Public engagement experience is valued by future employers and will be beneficial to my career prospects	
	12i	My public engagement was facilitated by an existing relationship between my institution and the community	
2. Values	11c	Value for collaboration	.846
	11f	Value for co-creation of knowledge	
	11l	Value for community work	
	11m	A desire to advance SJ	
	12j	I appreciate the way public engagement challenges me to self-reflect	
	12k	Public engagement gives purpose to research	
3. Discipline	12e	Public engagement allows me to engage in deeper learning and understanding of my discipline	.839
	12f	Public engagement facilitates my research or work goals related to my discipline	
	12h	My academic discipline is a natural fit for public engagement	
	12l	The public engagement work of others in my field is well-regarded by others in my discipline	

Category of Motivation	Survey Items	Cronbach's Alpha
4. Public/External Community & Validation	11a A specific societal issue 11i A specific population or community 11n Institutional or external incentives (i.e., grants, scholarships, awards) 11p Encouragement from a mentor not affiliated with my University	.627
5. Identity	12b Public engagement allows me to complete academic work related to one or more personal identities 12c Public engagement as significant to professional identity	.721
6. Peer Networking & Scholarship	11b Interaction with other publicly-engaged grad students 11h Publicly-engaged work of leaders in field of study 11k Attending conferences/workshops on public engagement	.766
7. Teaching & Pedagogy	12a Public engagement (such as service-learning) facilitates unique learning and development for students I teach 12d I view teaching as a form of public engagement because it involves citizenship development	.546

Motivation Factors Matrix

Factor	Extrinsic	Intrinsic	MST	O'Meara	Eatman
I. Institutional & Field Support of Public Engagement	X		Personal Agency Beliefs	X	X
II. Values		X	Personal Goals	X	X
III. Discipline	X	X	Personal Goals	X	X
IV. Public/External Community & Validation	X		Personal Agency Beliefs; Personal Goals	X	X
V. Identity		X	Personal Agency Beliefs; Personal Goals; Emotions	X	X
VI. Peer Networking & Scholarship	X	X	Personal Agency Beliefs; Emotions	X	X*
VII. Teaching & Pedagogy	X		Personal Agency Beliefs	X	X

Patterns of Motivation

Motivation survey item	Pearson Chi Sq. Asymp. Sig.
Q11b Interaction with other publicly-engaged graduate students	.033*
Q11p Encouragement from a mentor not affiliated with my University	.002**
Q12b Public engagement allows me to complete academic work that is related to one or more of my personal identities	.009**
Q12d I view teaching itself as a form of public engagement because it involves citizenship development	.012*
Q12g Public engagement experience is valued by future employers and will be beneficial to my career prospects	.038*

* p < .05   ** p < .01

Statistically significant associations between participants' responses to the discipline survey item and participants' responses to motivation-related survey items.

Limitations

- Sample

- Researcher

- Instruments

Conclusions

o New conceptual model for graduate motivations

o Extrinsic/intrinsic & MST frameworks point to complex/intersectional nature of individual motivations

o Preliminary findings suggest patterns of motivation

Recommendations

o Use of framework to identify "leverage points" for supporting publicly-engaged graduate students
o Further research on patterns of motivation
o Continued research on this topic and population

Questions

Eatman, T. K. (2012). The arc of the academic career bends toward publicly engaged scholarship. In Gilvin, A., Roberts, G. M., & Martin, C. (Eds), *Collaborative futures: Critical reflections on publicly active graduate education*. (25-48). Syracuse, NY: The Graduate School Press of Syracuse University.

O'Meara, K. (2008). Motivation for faculty community engagement: Learning from exemplars. *Journal of Higher Outreach and Engagement 12* (1), 7-29.