

Community Engagement: Program Development and Sustainability for Rural Programs



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Engaging the Community

- Who is participating today? (Type your role in the chat: e.g., faculty, program director, DIO, administrator, community member...)
- What does the phrase “Engaging the Community” bring to mind? (Submit a word or phrase in the chat)
- Engaging, and re-engaging, a number of communities over time is critical to excellent program development and sustainability and is easy to skip over or neglect.



Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Speaker: Randall Longenecker, MD

Disclosure

The speaker for this educational activity does not have relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose with ineligible companies whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.





Disclaimer: I'm Retired!

10 Pasture Drive, Bridgewater, Virginia

Once outstanding in my field, I've been put out to pasture!

“...a practice with a residency”







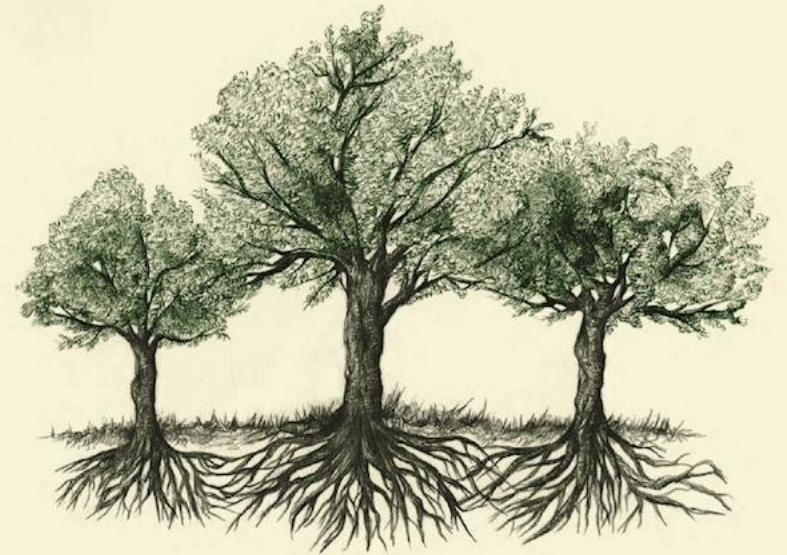
Courtesy of Mike Kennedy (KS)



foreword by TIM FLANNERY

PETER WOHLLEBEN

The Hidden Life of TREES



What They Feel,
How They Communicate

Discoveries from a Secret World

New York Times 2016

ACGME Accreditation, GME Finance, US Healthcare System

A Distributed Peer Network of Rural Medical Educators



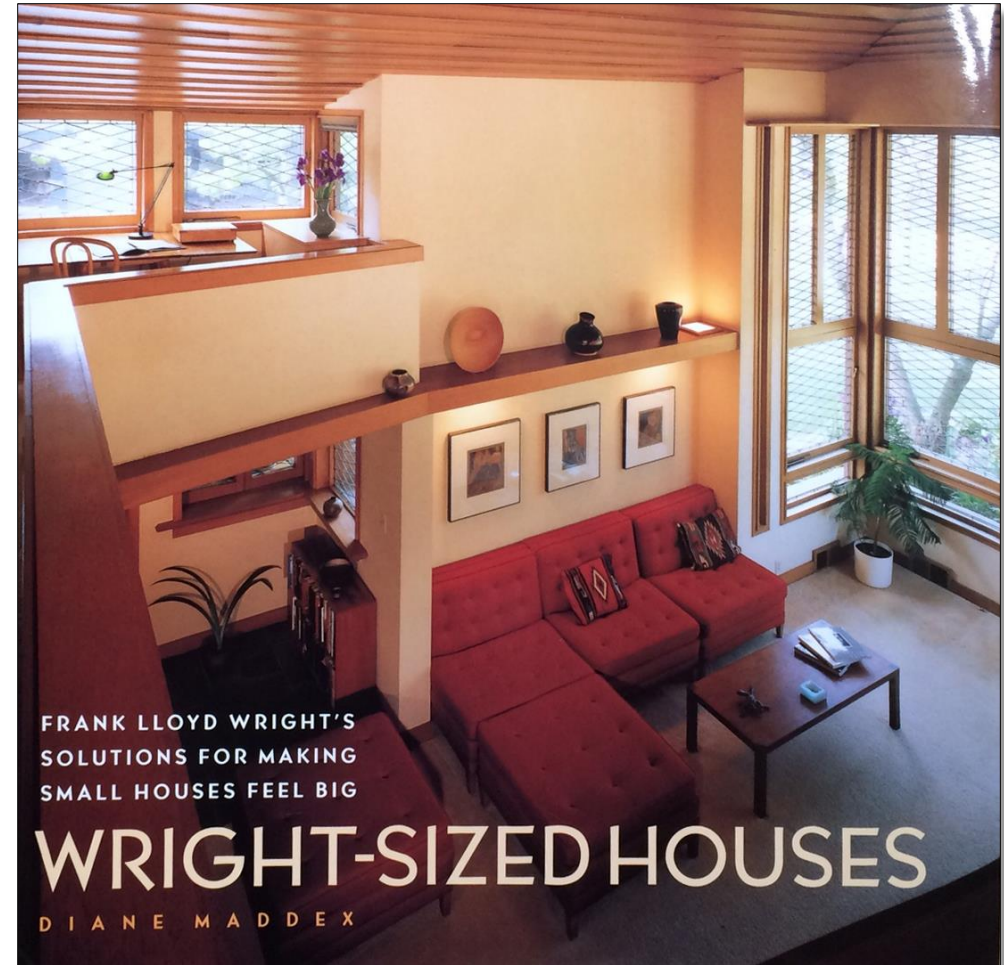
Community Engaged Residency Planning and Development

An Organic Approach

Designed to fit the assets and capacity of the rural community, all within the rules of accreditation and finance, but creatively adapting those rules to local realities

One size does not fit all.

[TREES](#), most recently updated 2022



Define Community Engagement

A latest definition:

“(a process that) ...builds sustainable relationships through trust and collaboration, strengthening community well-being. The process should be enduring, equitable, and culturally sensitive to all participants, with a shared goal of addressing the concerns of the community.”

Cohn, E, Ed. [Principles of Community Engagement](#), 3rd Edition,
Center for Disease Control, January 2025

Define Community Engagement

Sustainable relationships require a commitment to:

- Sharing power (sharing decision-making and collaboratively addressing the consequences of those decisions)
- Sharing resources
- Learning from others (humility)
- Taking collaborative action

...acting on real and relevant community assets and needs in an inclusive and community-centric way.

Cohn, E, Ed. [Principles of Community Engagement](#), 3rd Edition, Center for Disease Control, January 2025

Define Community Engagement

“Four academic institutions assessed barriers to fiscal requirements for essential community partnerships...” (Carter-Edwards et al., 2021). Difficulties included:

- Insufficient partnership equity
- Sub-par communication strategies
- Unclear institutional policies and procedures
- Overwhelming fiscal processes

Cohn, E, Ed. [Principles of Community Engagement](#), 3rd Edition, Center for Disease Control, January 2025

Community Engagement

...from "community-based" to "community engaged"
(Strasser 2015, ...from "about," to "in," to "with")

- Define the community
- Engage the community
- Identify the community's assets...
- Repeat

Community Engaged Residency Planning and Development

Define the Community

- Geography (Where?)
- People (Who? Who else?)
- Relationships
- Other...

With a shared task
and identity becomes
a Community of
Practice (CoP)



A Rural Community

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90134



<http://geographicallyyourswelcome.blogspot.com/2018/11/crossett>



acmconline.org/News-Updates/2017/July/Ashley-County-Medical-Center-Family-Clinic-of-As.aspx

Engage the Community

- Engage diverse community stakeholders as ongoing partners
- Involve people who represent the broad interests of the communities served, particularly vulnerable/underserved populations, in all stages of the process



A Rural Community

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Conduct an Inventory of Assets

Needs/Deficit Based

Money is the key resource.
Falls apart without money.

Asset Based

Relationships are the key resource. Falls apart when money becomes the focus.



A Rural Community

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Conduct an Inventory

[TREES: https://rttcollaborative.net/about/tools-and-assistance](https://rttcollaborative.net/about/tools-and-assistance)



A Rural Community

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What could possibly go wrong?

- Thinking of individuals as speaking for the community:
 - Passionate champion
 - The squeaky wheel
 - The president (or other officer) of an organization, even the mayor!
- What if you choose the wrong messenger from your team?
(Choose carefully and pick more than one!)
- All institutional (and community) relationships are fundamentally personal



A Rural Community

Community Engaged Residency Planning and Development

A Sequence and a Cycle

- Define, and redefine, the community
- Engage, and re-engage
- Determine, and re-visit, assets & capacity
- Design, and re-design, for initial and continuing accreditation
- Build, and re-build, for sustainability
- Repeat; all at the same time, over time!



A Rural Community

Community Engaged Residency Planning and Development

Toolbox – RuralGME.org



Community Engagement



Program Design & Development



Financial Planning

Toolbox Review



Institutional Sponsorship



Program Accreditation



Program Implementation

<https://portal.ruralgme.org/login>

Toolbox – RuralGME.org



Planting TREES in Rural Places
Training and Rural health professions
Education that is community Engaged and
Sustainable

- Community Assets and Capacity Inventory
- Accreditation timeline
- Sample curriculum
- Community impact tool
- Other

<https://rttcollaborative.net/about/tools-and-assistance/>

In Summary

- ❖ We've defined a community (Webinar attendees, rural medical educators, our local communities, and more), and you've defined your own
- ❖ We are engaging you as our community, through an on-line webinar
- ❖ You've initiated a mapping of community assets that you can continue to refine



Go, plant and grow a tree in your community!

References

- Longenecker R. “Sustaining Engagement and Rural Scholarship,” J of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, Fall 2002/Winter 2003; 8(1):87-97.
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- Strasser R; Worley P; Cristobal F; Marsh DC; Berry S; Strasser S; Ellaway R. “Putting Communities in the Driver’s Seat: The Realities of Community-Engaged Medical Education,” Academic Medicine 2015 Nov;90(11):1466-70.
- Longenecker R, Schmitz D. **T**raining and **R**ural health professions **E**ducation that is community **E**ngaged and **S**ustainable (TREES)
<https://rttcollaborative.net/about/tools-and-assistance/>, last updated 2022, PDF with WORD and EXCEL attachments
- Rural GME Toolbox>>Community Engagement:
<https://www.ruralgme.org/portal/toolbox> (Register for free)

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Questions, Comments?

