Responsible Research in Social Science:
What Stakeholders Want from Academics

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Academia is under siege in the United States – and we are fast losing allies because they believe our research isn't important in the real world. This article reviews three surveys of policy stakeholders in the UWG area, and concludes with recommendations to Universities and academics alike. These recommendations are aimed at making research more accessible. Indeed, it is the purpose of this journal to make research more accessible. But what else can we do? If we want to improve the human condition, it's up to academics to take the first steps toward more responsible research.

In the United States, education is under siege. Universities are feeling great pressure to conform to a new conception of higher education. Universities are now conceived of as businesses, meant to provide a service to their customers (otherwise known as our students). Academics find that our funding is greatly reduced, tuition must be increased, and what funding is left is based on formulas that prize the teaching of skills and the number of students who pass a class or graduate in a given number of years (never mind whether the students actually learn to think). Traditional liberal arts – learning research techniques, questioning authority and thought, critical thinking and writing skills – are falling to a focus on the student as a customer. As the students must pay back greater and greater amounts via student loans, who can blame them for wanting quick degrees that nearly always guarantee a job?

Politicians are behind this shift. In reducing the support that public universities receive, they have created an anxiety in the academia as never experienced before. These acts include treating higher education as a means to an end rather than an important aspect in and of itself, attacking tenure by instituting professor layoffs, creating the much-hated formula funding requirements, and viewing students as customers Professors are seen as

lazy – after all, they are only "working" nine or twelve hours per week. The perception is that academics are not working unless they are actually in front of a classroom. This attitude appears to be is based in part on the perception that academics produce irrelevant research that does not really matter in the "real world", and on the perception that and the university is overpriced and doesn't deliver valuable services.

This paper first reviews the relevancy of the university and the role of universities in communities. Then, it turns to the applicability of academic research completed in a university setting, arguing that the way social scientists have been taught to regard their research is unproductive in this larger debate. I review ways that the university can create better connections to local community partners – both political stakeholders and secondary school administrators and teachers – in societies that they serve. Academics make a number of assumptions about the desirability of their research to local, state, national, and international officials, as well as the relationship their research has to secondary school teachers. The paper reviews two surveys conducted to ask local stakeholders their perceptions of academic research and the responsibilities of the academy. Finally, the paper makes concrete recommendations to

academics and to universities in order to change these larger negative perceptions.

Beyond "Teaching Skills"

"Universities should be required to teach employment skills as part of degree courses because employers believe too many graduates are unfit for the workplace" (Paton, 4 June 2011). Universities should prepare their students for the workplace. In fact, much red ink has been spilled over this very subject, and the teaching of skills is not the subject of this paper. Beyond the teaching of job skills, however, universities have much to offer their local communities. Many universities operate a number of community partnerships. Chibucos and Lerner (1999) describe a number of very successful such partnerships, from Head Start initiatives to small business incubators. In addition, universities' economic impact on their communities is undoubted, as is the cultural impact.

"Virtually every institution, whether public or private, urban or rural, large or small, residential or commuter, two-year or four-year, technical or liberal arts, impacts its local community in many significant ways" (Nichols 1990, 4). How, then, can we think of all the ways that academics in a University setting can influence their communities? The impacts can be broken down into three rough categories: 1. economic, both direct and indirect; 2. cultural, both direct and indirect; and 3. educational, both direct and indirect.

Economic impacts have been studied for a number of years. The first set of economic impacts is direct. That is, universities are significant employers, creating a number of jobs at many levels that are typically filled by local community members. According to the University of West Georgia's website (the home of the writer), the university is home to over 1300 employees. According to the website BuyGeorgia.com, the university is the fourth largest employer in the county (the first is the county school system, the second is the hospital system, and the third is a private company, Southwire, that produces wire and cable). This plays an important role and gives the university a great deal of political clout. In addition to direct job creation, 12,000 students create demand in real estate (apartment rentals), commercial goods (groceries, gasoline), and many other local services (doctors, hair dressers, restaurants, etc).

In addition to the many direct economic effects that universities have on their communities, the indirect effects can be significant as well. I include here the fact that a large pool of labor is brought into the university community. The impact of human resource development (and transfer) cannot be understated: that is, universities train their workers, who then go on to work in private industry or in health care, and universities provide flexible training programs to locally employed individuals. Many universities also provide assistance and information to local individuals who want to start a small business or a non-profit. In providing entrepreneurs start-up assistance and local employees with knowledge and training, and other such information, universities indirectly impact their communities.

Beyond economic impacts, colleges and universities have a strong cultural impact on their communities and have a responsibility as a good neighbor. The character of a community changes with the influx of 18-24 year old residents. Sometimes those young, university-affiliated residents can come into conflict with traditional community residents. Strong town-gown relations led by the University President and the Mayor, with the cooperation of University Police Departments and local PD can ameliorate some of the potential negative effects.

Universities produce many positive cultural effects. University theatre programs produce plays; music departments provide

jazz ensembles and other musical acts; student services bring in nationally known acts and Nobel-prize winning speakers. All of these are open to community attendance, and often an incredibly low cost very close to home. In addition, universities employ New York Times bestselling authors; accomplished scientists; renounced artists, actors, and musicians; and nationally known poets. All of these people live as well as work in the community, and all benefit.

Finally – and I am saving the most critical impact for last – Universities have both a direct and indirect educational impact on their communities. Many of the books and articles that review university-community relations actually gloss over these impacts, calling them "obvious" without actually detailing what they are. Universities pursue a number of scholastic activities. Courses, degrees, certificates – all of these provide educational opportunities both to local traditional students and to local non-traditional students. Many of the so-called economic impacts of the University have educational components. Clearly, a university educates the workforce, whether traditional students or those who are going back to school after a period of time working. In addition, universities pay attention to and seek to meet the needs of the local economy: at the University of West Georgia, for example, a Bachelor degree in nursing has been expanded to an entire school of Nursing that even confers a Doctorate in Nursing education (recall that the second largest employer in the county is a hospital system; recent additions to the local economy include a Veterans Administration Hospital).

Many of the cultural impacts also trace their root to the educational mission of the university. Nobel prize laureates are, first and foremost, brought to campus to speak to our students. Theatre, art, and music productions are part of the hands-on education of a new generation of performers and artists. The professors whose books top the New York Times best seller list are also teaching English seminars.

As discussed above, the liberal arts education is under fire. Students are expected to learn job skills – and so they do. University departments have responded by organizing senior "exit seminars" designed to teach students to write resumes, to fill gaps in their education in regards to technology or skills like GIS or writing, or to help students meet with employers. Students are being actively encouraged to engage in internships, externships, and service learning.

However, the work on responsible research here steps into its own. Beyond our students, universities can provide learning opportunities to our communities. For example, entrepreneurs are provided with information by business professors and by business students. But what can *social* scientists do? We provide a non-profit management certificate, but beyond our students, how can we connect directly with our communities?

Social Scientists and Academic Research

In the simplest terms, academic studies are those that, in the eyes of at least two unpaid, expert reviewers, make a contribution to our understanding of the world. Academics spend many years perfecting methods, both quantitative and qualitative, and can spend years on a particular study. These studies have a series of non-linear steps: we find ourselves returning to earlier stages to change the question, for example, in response to new information. The stages of research help explain the process of academic research, and highlights those areas in which we fall short of a standard of *responsible* research.

Academic, scientific research begins with a unique and noteworthy question, continues with a suitable methodology, moves to an interesting answer, and then presents the results openly. Academics must ask a question

in a new way, or answer a previous question with new ideas. We might find a topic that hasn't been studied before, or apply literature from another discipline or theory to an old question. Academics must use the scientific method – not necessarily quantitative methods, but certainly must employ the logic of scientific enquiry (King, Keohane, and Verba 1999). Some disciplines, like philosophy, are focused on more esoteric questions; hard sciences typically focus on the physical world, and social sciences on the human world.

Why, then, do we continually see reference to the disconnect between research, theory and practice? Joseph Lepgold and Miroslav Nincic, writing in the rather narrow field of international relations theory, contend that the academic environment itself creates this problem. The academic working within what Lepgold and Nincic (2001) call the "academic incentive system" (that is, the university tenure system) is unable to focus on practical application and concerns. This is true for three reasons. First, in the ongoing struggle to find an interesting and *novel* question to study, researchers "are increasingly inclined to tackle smaller, often trivial, research problems, rather than questions of a more fundamental nature and broader reach (Lepgold and Nincic 2001, 15). We as academics *fail to ask the questions to which the public needs answers*. We do this because we must convince two or three experts that we are making an innovative contribution, and we feel that the basic, practical questions are less likely to impress our peers. It is easier to make a unique contribution in a niche no one else has yet occupied.

Secondly, according to Lepgold and Nincic, "technique has triumphed over substance in IR research programs". This was certainly true when they were writing – but it goes back much further. Weber wrote, "Science… presupposes that what is yielded by scientific work is important in the sense that it is worth being known" (Weber 1919, "Science as

Vocation", originally speech given to Munich University 1918). As King, Keohane and Verba (1999) put it, "the content is the method". We become so focused on methods in our graduate research programs that we, brandishing a particular method as one might brandish a hammer, go round searching for a nail to hit. We ignore other types of problems in our search for that elusive nail.

"As science came to require highly technical procedures, it ceased to be an amateur activity; to be able to do scientific work, one had to become an accomplished craftsman in those techniques. [This]… has allowed techniques to define the essence of some disciplines and research traditions, aside from any independent assessments of their substantive results. For example, according to a respected game theorist, so many formal models have been developed that political scientists cannot meaningfully compare their empirical performance. Failing such a test, 'the discipline of political science bases its evaluation of them on their mathematical elegance, the complexity of their notation, the journals in which they appear, or simply the reputations of those who design them'" (Lepgold and Nincic 2001, 16; quoting Ordeshook 1995, 178).

Finally, the academic structure within which most of us operate creates an incentive to impress our peers within the ivory tower, rather than those outside of it. That is, our careers, and our advancement in them, depend upon our ability to impress our fellow scholars. A dozen or so people who are top in our particular subfields have the ability to crush our careers if we go too far outside what they think is important – what Lepgold and Nincic call the "fad". Influencing politicians or policy stakeholders isn't rewarded by the tenure structure; indeed, colleagues who are asked to present knowledge in a relevant and practical way are often dismissed as a "talking head" or a "pundit" – not a serious researcher at all.

Making Research Responsible

Given the academic strictures outlined above, it is difficult to see how academics can, in service to their local policy stakeholders, communities, and politicians, make their research more practical. That is, how can we, as social scientists, formulate our research responsibility for positive social change and to positively influence the university's ties to and reputation in the local community, without damaging our own careers? According to Lepgold and Nincic, the answer is that not all scholarship is perfectly practical. There is room for knowledge for knowledge's own sake. However, they claim, there is no inherent reason that theory and practice must be separate.

My dissertation, a quantitative study of non-compliance with European Union law, was interesting to me for its own sake. However, I also made it clear that I was studying the problem as a means to make recommendations to the Council and the Commission as to how to ameliorate failure to comply with community laws. In the end, I was careful then – and I am careful now – to make three adjustments to my research so that I am not only talking to other researchers. First, I leave out any jargon possible, and explain any specialized language that I may use. I am not only talking to my peers, and therefore, if I want my research to matter outside the ivory tower, I must not use language that creates the feeling of the "out-group" in the reader. Second, I have always argued that a researcher must be asked to answer the question, "so what?". Italy fails to comply with many more EU laws than Britain. So what? This is a problem for the EU because it can create an unfair economic or other advantage when Italy fails to comply with Environmental law, for example. The third conscious activity is to always recommend ways to use the new knowledge from this study to make a positive change for some group or groups. My dissertation made a serious of recommendations in areas where policymakers *can* effect change (some non-compliance factors are structural and difficult if not impossible to change; others, however, are not).

Although Lepgold and Nincic seem to worry above all that our questions are not the right ones, I believe that we can make our research accessible and practical even when it is fills an academic niche – *we just need to make the conscious effort to do so*.

What Do Policy Stakeholders Want?

"Responsible research" in the social sciences has come to mean connecting our research to the practical concerns of policy makers in a way that contributes to positive social change. We assume that policy makers want our results, our advice, and our insight. While this is generally true (and is reflected in much "spilled ink" complaining of an ivory-tower like academic disconnect from the real world), my research asks local and state policy makers how we can best meet their needs, rather than assuming that, once again, "doctorate knows best" when we think policy stakeholders have already dismissed us as disconnected.

The research questions the assumptions that the literature has made. Firstly, the literature assumes that academia and the academy are disconnected from the "real world" – or at least, that policy makers and others believe that we are. Secondly, the literature assumes that we as academics fail to talk to these stakeholders in a way that is useful for them. Part of the problem is that academics publish our research in difficult to access journals that are aimed only at other academics. Finally, the literature makes an assumption that policy stakeholders *want* our assistance and insight. The following

hypotheses derive from these view in the literature:

H₁: Policy stakeholders believe that academia is disconnected from the real world.
H₂: Policy stakeholders believe that academia fails to help policy stakeholders deliver high quality services to the public.
H₃: Policy stakeholders believe that academia's primary audience is itself, not policy stakeholders, and that academia doesn't do enough to make its findings accessible to professionals in the policy process.
H₄: Policy stakeholders believe that academia has a responsibility to make real-world recommendations to policy stakeholders, but that academic articles fail to provide recommendations to policy stakeholders.
H₅: Policy stakeholders believe that academics should spend more time researching real problems and providing solutions to stakeholders, and that academic journal articles should be focused more on real-world solutions and positive social change.
H₆: Policy stakeholders believe that academic journals are difficult to access, aimed only at other academics; and they don't read academic journals.
H₇: Policy stakeholders would read more academic journals if they were freely available, and if they provided more practical advice to stakeholders.
H₈: Policy stakeholders believe that academia has a responsibility to provide free or low-cost workshops on research in policy issues to stakeholders, and would attend applicable workshops and public lectures on policy issues.

What Do High School Teachers Want from Academics?

The relationship between Colleges of Education and K-12 teachers is very close; however, academics in social sciences, hard sciences, humanities, and business often fail to connect to our counterparts in high schools. When we do make those connections, we tend to provide professional development seminars, and not much else. My research asks local K-12 government school teachers *how* we in academic disciplines can best meet their needs, where we fall short, and what we can do to increase support of their efforts in bringing the best possible students to the University. The hypotheses generated are very similar to those of the policy stakeholders above:

H₁: Teachers believe that academia is disconnected from the real world.
H₂: Teachers believe that academia fails to help them deliver high quality education to children.
H₃: Teachers believe that academia's primary audience is itself, and that academics doesn't do enough to make its findings accessible to high school teaching professionals.
H₄: Teachers believe that academia has a responsibility to make knowledge accessible, but that academic articles fail to provide this.
H₅: Teachers believe that academics should spend more time researching real problems, and that academic journal articles should be focused more on real-world knowledge and positive social change.
H₆: Teachers believe that academic journals are difficult to access, aimed only at other academics; and they don't read academic journals.
H₇: Teachers would read more academic journals if they were freely available, and if they avoided jargon and provided practical tools to help them educate teenagers.
H₈: Teachers believe that academia has a responsibility to provide free or low-cost workshops on their research, and would attend applicable workshops and public lectures.

Research Methodology

The best method for discovering the beliefs and opinions of policy stakeholders and secondary school teachers is to ask them. Through an expert survey of policy makers and other stakeholders in the policy process, and a separate expert study of the views of administrators and teachers in local high schools, a picture of the best way academics can do research in service to our local communities emerges. These surveys were available to the broadest possible set of responders, and I make no claim to be representative; indeed, both are meant as an expert survey.

Expert surveys are quite widely used in comparative politics. They have been used with success in uncovering party issue positions, voter opinions, and policymaker activity (see for example the works of Gary Marks). However, there is some question of whether they are valid instruments. It is therefore very important, according to Steenbergen and Marks (2007) to optimize survey design. The stakeholder survey was created using Survey Gizmo (see Appendix I), and the teacher survey was created using Qualtrics (see Appendix II). The survey has been completed electronically and contains one open-ended question, but is primarily focused on a series of statements to which respondents have been asked to agree or disagree (along with identifying information about their position, though not their personal details). The survey instruments are therefore very straightforward.

There are further lions to tame with this particular design. The responses might not accurately reflect either reality *or* their true opinions. In the context of this research, however, I am primarily interested in finding out whether the opinions of local community members match the assumptions in the literature and in whether academia can improve those opinions so as to improve town-gown relations and, further, to improve the funding opportunities of the university.

The problem of the respondents perhaps hiding their true opinions is one that all survey research faces. However, the researcher has put in place safeguards that protect the identities of the respondents, so that they will face no consequences for giving their true opinions. The research, with its safeguards and survey instruments, were approved by the University of West Georgia Institutional Review Board; the school survey was only administered in schools with principal approval – and the principals sent the survey to their staff lists, but did not see the responses.

The University of West Georgia is located in Carroll County, Georgia, USA. The closest counties are Coweta, Douglas, Paulding, Haralson, and Heard. I have gathered email addresses for county and city employees by using the publically available website of the all the local counties and county seats. Every county or city employee from the county commissioner down to the head of animal control whose email address was published on the website of the county or city for which they work was sent a copy of the survey and an invitation to participate. The survey has therefore was sent to 384 possible participants, and of those, 9% responded. The schoolteacher survey was sent to principals in 9 local high schools. Three responded favorably and in turn sent it to all teachers and academic administrative staff in those schools. This represents a very small group of teachers – estimated at about 200 at the highest end. I have had 27 responses.

Results from the Policy Stakeholders

The initial survey results from counties near the campus are telling. H_1 is confirmed: 79% of policy stakeholders either strongly or somewhat agree that academia is "disconnected from the real world" and 88% believe that academia is "out of touch" with what they need to do their jobs. However, 53%

of policy stakeholders strongly or somewhat agree that believe that academia does a good job of assisting them in delivering high quality services to the public – despite being disconnected to the "real world". While the literature is confirmed – policymakers really do think academics stay in their ivory towers and don't know anything about the real world – academics are still reaching some policy stakeholders.

Hypothesis three is also roundly confirmed. Seventy-six percent of respondents say that academia's primary audience is itself, not policy stakeholders, and 67% agree that that academia doesn't do enough to make its findings accessible to professionals in the policy process. Our research remains somewhat inaccessible for the average respondent.

Sixty-five percent of respondents believe that academia has a responsibility to make real-world recommendations to policy stakeholders, but only 53% agree that academics fail to provide recommendations to policy stakeholders. I find this somewhat mixed. One of three policy stakeholders doesn't think that academics *should provide real world recommendations*. In other words, one of three doesn't want our advice.

Maybe the reason is that they don't think we study important problems. Seventy-six percent of respondents say that academics should spend more time researching real problems and providing solutions to stakeholders, although only 59% believe that academic journal articles should be focused more on real-world solutions and positive social change.

The sixth hypothesis turns to specific questions about academic journals – the bread and butter of tenure-seeking and promotion-seeking academics. Policy stakeholders believe that academic journals are difficult to access: 65% percent agree or strongly agree that journals are expensive or housed only in University libraries accessible only to students,

faculty, and staff (university libraries are typically closed to non-card holders). Policy stakeholder further believe that the journals are written only for the audience of other academics – 74%, therefore, have no incentive to seek out these difficult-to-access journals; and they, therefore, don't read academic journals – 59% say they don't read them. Academics, however, need not despair, because the 7th hypothesis is confirmed as well: 85% of respondents would read more academic journals if they were freely available (that is, in common parlance, they were "open access") – and 91% would read them if they provided more practical advice to stakeholders!

The final hypothesis relates to lectures and workshops. Interestingly, only 53% of respondents believe that the university has a *responsibility* to provide lectures to the public, only 56% believe the university has a responsibility to provide lectures to policy stakeholders, and only 53% supported workshops for policymakers. However, almost all respondents would attend low-cost, applicable workshops and lectures if academics and the university were to sponsor these activities – 97% agree that they would attend relevant workshops and lectures.

Results from the High School Survey

Before this paper delves into the results, it is important to discuss exactly who answered these questions.

Table 1. Respondents to Survey

Secondary teacher in STEM disciplines	25.93%
Secondary teacher in arts disciplines	7.41%
Secondary teacher in humanities disciplines	11.11%
Secondary teacher in social science disciplines	25.93%
Secondary teacher in technical disciplines	3.70%

Secondary teacher in business disciplines	3.70%
Secondary teacher in other disciplines	14.81%
Secondary education administrator (principal)	7.41%
Total	100%

Table 1 shows that over half of the respondents were teachers in STEM and in social science disciplines. I rather suspect that those teachers were predisposed to answer a survey. Interestingly, 60% of the respondents had been working in secondary education for more than 10 years. The longest tenure was 47 years and the shortest was 1 year. Sixty-three percent of the respondents were female. Eighty-eight percent fell between 31 and 60; 37% were between 41 and 50. Nearly 70% had a master's degree. These are learned people who value what we in academia do. They should be our most ardent supporters. Hypothesis one is confirmed: Teachers believe that academia is disconnected from the real world: a margin of 58% agreed, 8% neutral, and 32% disagreed. Hypothesis two is somewhat mixed: on the one hand, 50% say that subject matter academics are out of touch with what they need to do their jobs, but on the other hand, 65% agreed that academics do a good job helping them deliver high quality education to students. This suggests that academic records are somewhat mixed, and that over the course of their careers, secondary teachers have had a varied relationship with academics. Secondary teachers believe that academia's primary audience is ourselves. Only 27% disagree with the statement that academic research is difficult to understand, while 54% say that our audience is ourselves and a further 12% are neutral. An incredible 92% agree that academics have a responsibility to provide real world findings, but only 12% believe that academics do enough to make their research accessible to busy secondary teachers – a whopping 77% say we don't do enough. Sixty-nine percent believe that academic research fails to provide real-world applications and recommendations to them. Fifty-eight percent say that subject matter academics should spend more time researching real problems and providing information to secondary teachers. We can only conclude that hypothesis four and five are confirmed. We *don't* do enough to make our research accessible.

Academic journals are, according to secondary teachers, difficult to access and are aimed at other academics (58%). Teachers also believe that these should be focused more on real-world problems (69%). Sixty-two percent say they don't read academic journals. However, the research does provide reason to hope: 77% would read journals if they were easier to access (that is, freely available), and 81% would read them if they were more focused on practical matters important to them.

While only 58% believe that the university has a responsibility to provide workshops at low cost to teachers, 65% believe that universities have a responsibility to provide lectures to secondary teachers, and only 46% believe that the university has a responsibility to provide lectures to the public, 92% would attend low-cost, relevant workshops and 77% would attend lectures.

Recommendations

The results of this survey are compelling. Policy stakeholders and teachers like believe that academics are disconnected from the real world and real world problems. Policymakers don't think we do a great job helping them make touch policy decisions and believe that academics study problems that aren't very important. Teachers have somewhat mixed feelings about whether we do a good job at helping them bring the best students to the university. They believe academic journals are

expensive, difficult to access, difficult to process, and only aimed at other academics anyway. However, they are open to attending public lectures, attending policy stakeholder or teacher professional development workshops, and reading open-access journals that provide more practical advice.

The open-ended responses from the policy stakeholder survey were telling. Respondents said that academics need to get better at communication, to initiate contact with them to find out what problems the real world has and what we can do to find a solution, to work more closely and "collaborate" with them. They also asked for help with new technologies and making resources available that local officials may not have or may not know how to use. They said, over and over, that researchers needed to get out into neighborhoods, do internships, and the like to find out what they are really doing as policy stakeholders. They say that academics are unable to understand what they are really up against on a daily basis. Too often, academics assume that they know best. After all, they have been studying something for years and have an arsenal of research tools at their proposal.

The open ended responses from the teacher survey were more than telling – they were eye-opening. On the one hand, respondents value subject matter courses. One respondent said, "Subject matter courses are probably more important that the Education courses." Another adds, "I think subject matter academia are of great value to my position as a secondary teacher. I would consider these researchers to be experts in their field, and their inquiry assists me in delivering more quality education to my students." A third said, "Subject matter should be the primary educational focus for secondary educators. Quite frankly, those that can teach at that level do not benefit much from extensive pedagogy training. It is different than elementary education. Teachers should be EXPERTS in their field."

Unfortunately, while they value what we do, some are unconvinced they can access or evaluated it. "I think that subject matter academia is very important to their field. However, what makes for good research in the hard sciences often doesn't translate to the "real world" of K-12 instruction. I think it is important in that teachers of those subjects get a glimpse into a world outside of education... but it doesn't give the researchers a glimpse into the world of K-12 education." Another put it much more succinctly: "Theories and research are great. But HOW does it apply to my students needs?"

The frustration of secondary teachers with academics – traditional, stodgy, and unconnected – is palpable. "The work of the academy is critical to the ongoing growth of the discipline. However, it is depressing to see those in the academy, especially the ones who focus on research over teaching, continue to repeat the research strategies they learned in their preparation. With the modern technologies available, the digital accessibility of primary sources, and the broad look at topics spawned by multiple perspectives and the inclusion of voices denied us in Cold War days, or other times of repression, academics rarely avail themselves of the mass of information now available. As a teacher of young people, I do not need more knowledge about any period of history, in my case, that I could have gotten through the years, via traditional sources. What I would be interested in is sources of information on newer eras, and new information on older eras, that I can bring into my classroom electronically. Especially in history, we have moved from military and political history to a more social, cultural, and economical view of the stories of life through the centuries. Yet, because that was not a part of the canon when we matriculated through higher education, we long for access to it now. The few things I have attended at the college

have really been refresher courses in what I already knew. Bring academics into the modern world."

These secondary teachers should be academics' closest allies. They, with advanced degrees, should understand implicitly what the academy is doing. But we have closed them out – using too much jargon, limiting their access to our journals, and dismissing their concerns. Too often, subject academics assume that they know best. After all, they have been studying something for years and have an arsenal of research tools at their proposal. We are far too dismissive of our secondary counterparts.

What can we do? This paper seeks to research *responsibly*: that is, to offer practical advice to academics and policy makers alike. *Open Communication*. Universities should host workshops that bring theorists and practitioners together to discuss their needs and figure out ways we can collaborate on issues, and bring teachers together to discuss secondary school needs and figure out ways we can collaborate. One way to do this would be to designate an office on campus to be a single point of contact when policy stakeholders need to find expert assistance. Another way would be to host periodic open house events, or workshop events, aimed at certain segments of the local stakeholder population. However, university should be *initiating* contact with these people, and not waiting for them to come to us. We can offer so much, if we only try to make our research practical and interesting. We need to show them what we can do and how we can help. Placing students in internships in larger numbers will also provide our students, whether they go on to careers in academia or not, a fresh, practical look at what they can do in the service of the public good. In addition, we should work with local policy stakeholders to provide student service learning activities to help these policy stakeholders with particular goals they *they themselves* have identified..

- *Create Open-Access Journals*. The absolute best way to make our research accessible is to eliminate financial barriers to it. The university can, with small financial support, create open-access journals that would provide a forum for peer-reviewed research and academic service. Academics can publish their best work that incorporates practical public policy advice and the university increases the opportunity for its own faculty to provide a serious service to both the policy stakeholders and their various disciplines. The new journals should connect academia and policy stakeholders in a practical fashion.
- *Underwrite a Lecture Series and Workshop Series*. The university should work with policy stakeholders and secondary schools to identify topics for both a lecture series and a workshop series, not just in political science, perhaps, but also in conjunction with mass communications, business, economics, and others. These lectures and workshops can be held with our own resources – we have the space, and we have the expertise.

All of these recommendations are attainable. The resources of the university are considerable, and we should use those to improve our image among the secondary teachers – who should be our biggest allies – in our neighboring communities. In order to make the extra work for the faculty worthwhile, however, these activities, which bridge the gap between academic work and service (and indeed go beyond both of these) must be valued in the tenure process – else why, as the literature points out, would anyone bother doing them? We must value open-access, peer-reviewed publishing as we would any other publishing activity. We must not discount published work just because the

journals are not printed by a company that then sells them for hundreds of pounds to University libraries. Given the disincentives created by the academic tenure process, it is critically important that faculty are rewarded for participating in seminars, workshops, and lectures. It is as much work to convert your research and university lectures into workshops that are applicable for teachers as it is to publish. University tenure processes must value the organization and teaching of workshops and lectures as an activity worthy of, perhaps, course releases, credit toward tenure as grant work might be credited, or the like.

Conclusion

If our disciplines are serious in responding to the needs of the policy stakeholders we claim to want to help through responsible research, we must open communication with them and credit academics that do this work. We will improve our public image, improve our contribution to improving the public good, and, one hopes, convert policy stakeholders into the *allies* of public higher education once again.

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Appendix I: Policy Stakeholder Survey Instrument

Responsible Research

Responsible Research Survey

Responsible Research in Public Policy

You have been asked to participate in an expert survey on the attitudes of policy stakeholders toward academia and academic resources. The purpose of this expert survey is to examine the ways that policy stakeholders view academic research. The survey asks questions related to the responsibility of academia to policy makers, policy practitioners, lobbyists, and non-governmental stakeholders.

Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary and you may decide to stop at any time with no penalty, or you may choose not to answer some of the survey questions. All responses will be kept confidential; no identifying information is collected by the survey (names, etc) and the email list requesting participation will be kept totally confidential. This survey should not take more than 15 minutes.

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this research or the survey please contact Dr. Heather A. D. Mbaye, Associate Professor, 678-839-4988, hmbaye@westga.edu, or contact the IRB at irb@westga.edu.

By continuing the survey, you acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age, have read the above information, and provide my consent to participate under the terms above.

1. Which of the following best describes your primary job status?

   ○ elected policymaker (for example mayor, state representative, US Senator)

   ○ elected administrator (for example judge, coroner)

○ non-elected public agency head or top administrator

○ non-elected public mid-level manager

○ non-elected public employee

○ non-public agency head or top administrator of a policy-
   interested agency (Food Bank, Rape Crisis Center, etc)

○ non-public mid-level manager of a policy-interested agency
   (Food Bank, Rape Crisis Center, etc)

○ non-public employee in a policy interested agency (Food Bank,
   Rape Crisis Center, etc)

○ Other - Write In (Required)

   [   ]   *

2. How many years have you held this position?

   ○ less than 2 years

   ○ 2-5 years

   ○ 5-10 years

   ○ more than 10 years

3. What is the total number of years you have worked in public service?

   [   ]

4. What is your gender?

   ○ male

   ○ female

   ○ other/prefer not to answer

5. Which of the following categories includes your age?

   ○ 20 and under

   ○ 21-30

   ○ 31-40

   ○ 41-50

○ 51-60

○ 61-70

○ 71 and over

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6. In this survey, "academia" refers to researchers who study politics, public policy, political behavior, and similar topics while employed full time as educators in the University environment. "Policy stakeholders" are the government employees, elected officials, and NGO leaders that have a stake in how policy is made and carried out.

What do you think of academia in relation to academic research?

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7. Which of the following categories most accurately describes your highestlevel of education?

○ Some high school

○ High School Diploma

○ Some college

○ 2 year undergraduate degree

○ 4 year undergraduate degree

○ Masters degree

○ Terminal professional degree (law, medical, dental, etc)

○ Doctorate

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8. For each of the following statements, indicate whether you agree or disagree on the following scale:
Strongly agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly Disagree

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Academia is disconnected from the real world.	○	○	○	○

Academia does a good job helping me deliver high quality services to the public.	○	○	○	○
Academic research performed by academia is hard to understand.	○	○	○	○
Academia is out of touch with what we need to do our jobs.	○	○	○	○
Academia's primary audience is itself, not policy stakeholders like me.	○	○	○	○
Academia doesn't do enough to make its findings accessible to busy professionals like me.	○	○	○	○
Academia has a responsibility to make real-world recommendations to policy stakeholders like me.	○	○	○	○
Academic articles fail to provide recommendations to policy stakeholders like me.	○	○	○	○
Academics should spend more time researching real problems and providing solutions to stakeholders.	○	○	○	○
Academic journals are difficult to access because they are expensive or only housed in University libraries in print form.	○	○	○	○
Academic journals are aimed only at other academics.	○	○	○	○
Academic journals should be focused more on real-world solutions and positive social change.	○	○	○	○
I don't read academic journals.	○	○	○	○

I would read more academic journals if they were freely available.	O	O	O	O
I would read more academic journals if they provided more practical advice to stakeholders.	O	O	O	O
Academia has a responsibility to provide free or low-cost workshops on research in policy issues to stakeholders like me.	O	O	O	O
I would attend workshops on policy issues, if they applied to me and were not expensive.	O	O	O	O
Academia has a responsibility to provide free lectures on their research to the public.	O	O	O	O
Academia has a responsibility to provide free lectures on their research to stakeholders like me.	O	O	O	O
I would attend lectures on policy issues, if they applied to me and were not expensive.	O	O	O	O

9. How can academia best assist you in providing the best possible services most efficiently?

Submit

Appendix II: Survey Instrument

Responsible Research - Secondary Teachers

Responsible Research Attitudes among Secondary Educators

You have been asked to participate in an expert survey. The purpose of this expert survey is to examine the ways that teachers in K-12 view academic research. We will ask questions related to the responsibility of academic disciplines beyond Colleges and Schools of Education to teachers in secondary education. Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary and you may decide to stop at any time with no penalty, or you may choose not to answer some of the survey questions. All responses will be kept confidential; no identifying information is collected by the survey (names, etc.) and the email list requesting participation will be kept totally confidential. This survey should not take more than 15 minutes. If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this research or the survey please contact Dr. Heather A. D. Mbaye, Associate Professor, 678-839-4988, hmbaye@westga.edu, or contact the IRB at irb@westga.edu. By continuing the survey, you acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age, have read the above information, and provide my consent to participate under the terms above.

1. Which of the following best describes your primary job status?
〇 secondary teacher in STEM disciplines (1)
〇 secondary teacher in arts disciplines (2)
〇 secondary teacher in humanities disciplines (3)
〇 secondary teacher in social science disciplines (4)
〇 secondary teacher in technical disciplines (5)
〇 secondary teacher in business disciplines (6)
〇 secondary teacher in other disciplines (7)
〇 secondary education administrator (non-principal) (8)
〇 secondary education administrator (principal) (9)
〇 Other secondary school staff (10)

2. How many years have you held this position?
〇 less than 2 years (1)
〇 2-5 years (2)
〇 5-10 years (3)
〇 more than 10 years (4)

3. What is the total number of years you have worked in secondary education, in all positions?

4. What is your gender?
❍ Male (1)
❍ Female (2)
❍ other (3)
❍ prefer not to answer (4)

5. What is your age?
❍ 20 and under (1)
❍ 21-30 (2)
❍ 31-40 (3)
❍ 41-50 (4)
❍ 51-60 (5)
❍ 61-70 (6)

6. In this survey, "subject matter academia" refers to researchers who study subject matter that is not typically related to pedagogy, classroom management, and other topics normally housed in Colleges and Schools of Education. "Secondary educators" are all teachers and administrators of secondary education (i.e., grades 9-12). What do you think of subject matter academia in relation to their academic research? This is your general opinion of subject matter academics and their research duties and interests.

7. Which of the following categories most accurately describes your highest level of education?
❍ No college degree (1)
❍ 4 year undergraduate degree (2)
❍ Master degree (3)
❍ Terminal professional degree (law, medical, dental, etc.) (4)
❍ Doctorate in an academic subject matter (5)
❍ Doctorate in Education (6)

8. For each of the following statements, indicate whether you agree or disagree.

	Not Applicable (1)	Strongly Disagree (2)	Disagree (3)	Somewhat Disagree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (5)	Somewhat Agree (6)	Agree (7)	Strongly agree (8)
Subject matter academia is disconnected from the real world. (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academia does a good job helping me deliver high quality education to students. (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academic research performed by academia is hard to understand. (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academia is out of touch with what we need to do our jobs. (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academia's primary audience is itself, not secondary educators like me. (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academia doesn't do enough to make its findings accessible to busy professionals like me. (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academia has a responsibility to make important real-world findings. (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academic articles fail to provide recommendations to secondary teachers like me. (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Subject matter academic should spend more time researching real problems and providing information to secondary teachers. (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academic journals are difficult to access because they are expensive or only housed in University libraries in print form. (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academic journals are aimed only at other academics. (11)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academic journals should be focused more on real-world information and positive social change. (12)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I don't read subject matter academic journals. (13)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would read more subject matter academic journals if they were freely available. (14)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would read more subject matter academic journals if they provided more practical advice to stakeholders like teachers. (15)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Subject matter academia has a responsibility to provide free or low-cost workshops on subject matter to secondary teachers like me. (16)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would attend workshops on subject matter, if they applied to me and were not expensive. (17)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academia has a responsibility to provide free lectures on their research to the public. (18)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Subject matter academia has a responsibility to provide free lectures on their research to secondary educators like me. (19)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would attend lectures on subject matter issues, if they applied to me and were not expensive. (20)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

9. How can subject matter academia best assist you in providing the best possible education to your secondary students most efficiently?

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