



College of Fine
& Applied Arts

Public Engagement Research Option (PERO)

An Overview of PERO, the PERO selection process, and PERO MOU

What is PERO? *Why PERO?*

PERO is the Public Engagement Research Option at the University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign

Reflects the mission of our land grant university to “enhance the lives of citizens in Illinois. Across the nation, and around the world through leadership in learning, discovery, engagement, and economic development”

Reflects the University’s strategic plan, “Make a Significant and Visible Impact,” to identify societal challenges and address these through a variety of channels

Faculty Public Engagement is Critical to this Mission and Goal

Increasingly faculty are placing importance on engaging with publics, co-productive research
We need to better facilitate this and to recognize this impact in our promotion processes



What is PERO?

PERO is the Public Engagement Research Option at the University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign

Alternative Path through the promotion and tenure process at the University of Illinois, in which:

- Publicly engaged research with public partners, organizations, and/or communities will benefit from an alternative approach to review its impact for tenure.
- Such research, while still producing traditional products (e.g. articles, books, performances, artworks, grants), produces "alternative products" (e.g. public policy reports, websites, public exhibitions, community design plans) that are not often well evaluated by traditional metrics.
- PERO provides a path for faculty whose research and products should be evaluated by alternative metrics for societal impact.

See PERO Guide AY 2024-2025



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What is Publicly Engaged Research?

- Research that addresses societal problems, contributes to the public good
- Conducted in collaboration with public organizations, partners, or communities
- Creates mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources
- Generates outcomes for all partners, with a focus on societal outcomes
- Methods and processes as well as products will vary across disciplines

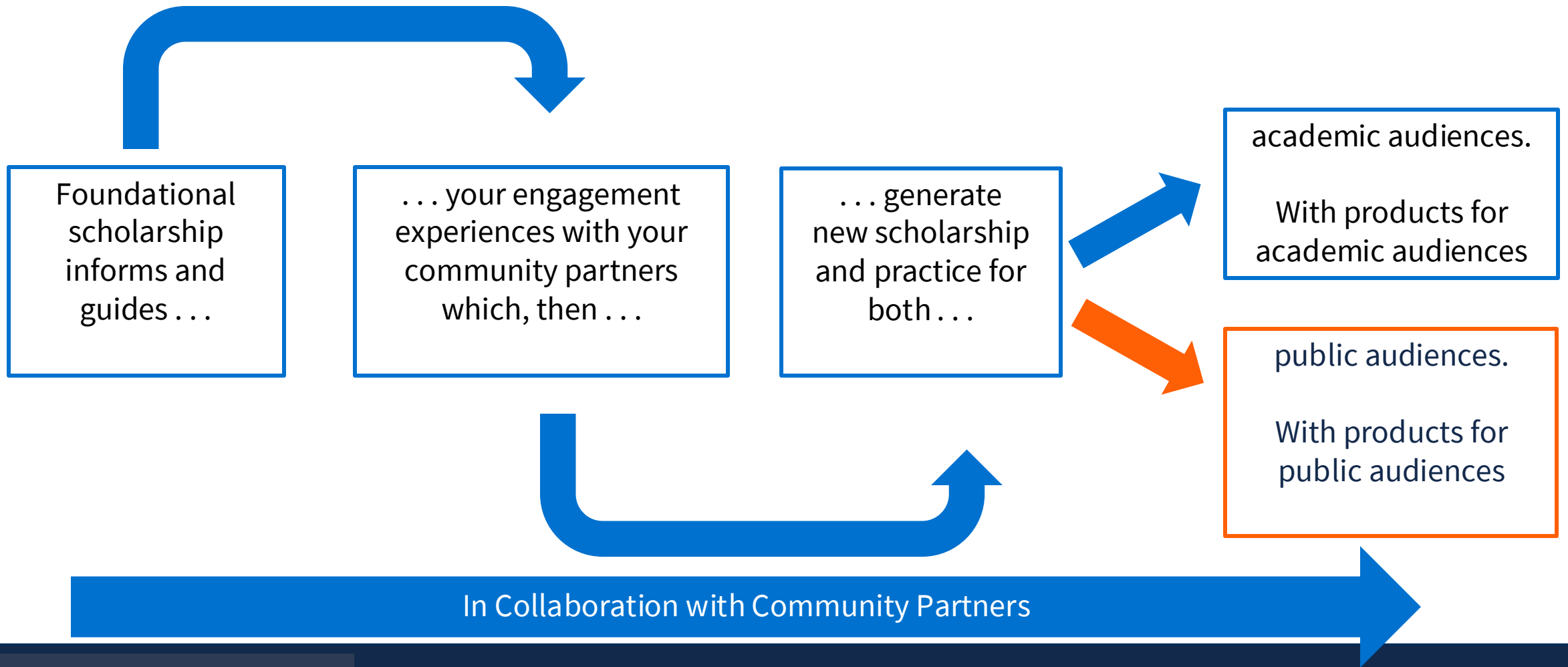
See PERO Guide AY 2024-2025



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Slide adapted from Prof. Eva Pomerantz

Public Engagement Research



Landscape Architecture Faculty Member



Research

Works with partner organizations to advance green infrastructure and urban agriculture in disadvantaged communities

Public Products

- Generates public guidelines documents and community plans for design and implementation
- Creates public reports and workshops on key environmental factors present in communities
- Co-creates curriculum modules for youth and young adults to participate in site analysis and design decision-making

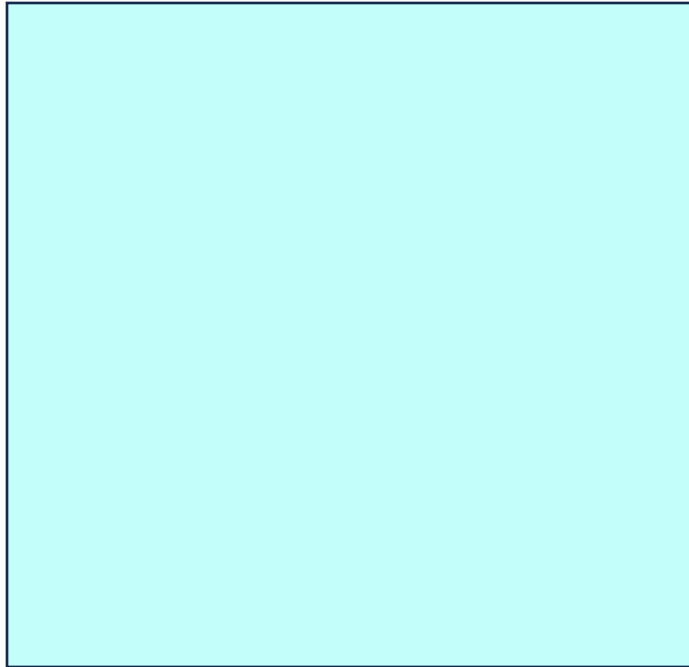
Kelley Lemon, Assistant Professor



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With permission by Kelley Lemon

Hypothetical FAA Example



Name, School

Research

Scholarship in Black arts traditions and collaborates with school districts and communities to integrate Black arts into K-12 curriculum and community arts programs

Public Products

- Co-produces public exhibitions with communities centered on key topics in Black arts
- Collaborates with teachers and administrators in the development of curricular changes, in collaboration with school districts and individual schools to adopt new curriculum
- Develops teacher training modules in Black arts, attended by teachers, and conducts surveys of enhanced learning outcomes



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PERO : Faculty Selection Process



How does PERO Work?



Complete this Process Before
End of 3rd Year



Decide if
PERO
good fit,
with EO

Tenure Code 1-2, 3



Develop
PERO MOU
with EO

Tenure Code 1-2, 3



PERO
Advisory
Committee
reviews

No Later than Fall of
Tenure Code 3

By End of Year 3



Fully-signed
MOU with
EO & Dean

End of Spring of
Tenure Code 3

Before Candidate
Submits List of
Evaluators (Year 5)



Reconsider
if PERO
good fit

Early Spring of Tenure
Code 5

Decide if PERO a Good Fit, sample questions



Does the research draw on the candidate's expertise?



Does the research meaningfully address a community or societal problem, need, concern, issue, or interest?



Does the work have a significant measurable, direct impact on the public at the local, state, national, or international level?



Is the research a collaboration with community or other public partners – for example, the partner identified the need for the research or is involved in the development of the methods?



Are the discipline's traditional review mechanisms insufficient to evaluate the impact of the work?



Is review of the work's impact by stakeholders outside academia critical to the evaluation of its success?

Structure of PERO MOU



I. Background.

II. General Terms.

- A. Description and Instructions for Candidate.
- B. Timing of the PERO Decision
- C. *PERO External Letter Options*
- D. *PERO Alternative Products and Means of Evaluating Impact*
- E. PERO Advisory Committee Feedback

III. Acknowledgement of Agreement.

Signatures: Candidate, EO, Dean

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH OPTION (PERO)

Memorandum of Understanding

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish that:

- (1) **Insert Faculty Candidate's Name**, referred to as the "candidate" from this point, has selected the Public Engagement Research Option (PERO) in the promotion and tenure [process](#);
- (2) the candidate's Unit Executive Officer (EO) and Dean's office are aware of and approve this decision; and
- (3) all parties understand and will follow the PERO guidelines.

If after signing this MOU, the candidate decides to opt out of PERO, that decision must be made before the deadline for the candidate to submit their list of external evaluators and be documented in an addendum to the candidate's MOU. The MOU and all addendums must be included in the candidate's dossier (see attachments to Provost Communication 9).

I. Background

The paramount consideration in the evaluation of publicly engaged research is the degree to which it has societal impact—as evident, for example, in changes in policies, practices, or community capacity. However, gauging such impact can be a challenge in the promotion and tenure process. Publicly engaged research may generate scholarly and/or creative products (e.g., policy reports, manuals, and/or museum exhibits) whose impact may not be adequately or accurately captured by traditional means of evaluation. PERO addresses this issue by permitting the addition of alternative means of evaluation that gauge societal impact.

As highlighted in [Provost Communication 9](#) (see section II.A.1), publicly engaged research draws on a faculty member's expertise to define and address societal problems, concerns, issues, or interests to contribute to the public good. Such research occurs in *collaboration* with communities and/or organizations at the local, state, national, or international level.

II. General Terms

A. PERO IS FOR PUBLICLY ENGAGED RESEARCH

PERO is designed to support the evaluation of publicly engaged *research*. Thus, PERO is only for faculty whose research program is largely publicly engaged and the discipline's traditional review mechanisms are insufficient to evaluate the impact of the research. Beyond these considerations, PERO is likely an appropriate option for faculty answering in the affirmative to the majority of questions provided in the [PERO Guide](#) in the attachments to [Provost Communication 9](#).

Instructions for candidate: Provide a three-page research statement in which you describe the goal(s) of your research program. Describe the process and methods of publicly engaged research undertaken in your work. Indicate what you are trying to accomplish in the next three to five years, particularly in terms of societal impact. Link your research program goal(s) to the types of alternative products and means of evaluation you specify in the table in Section E of this MOU. In addition, discuss how these products combine with your planned traditional products (e.g., peer reviewed journal articles, books, and/or grants) to achieve your goals. This statement will likely be a draft for the research statement you include in your promotion and tenure dossier. *Include this research statement as a pdf attachment to this MOU. Label the file with your first initial, last name, and "RS"—for example, LSmithRS.pdf.*

MOU Template Updated: 8/25/2024

3 Key Components of PERO MOU – “To-do”s



Research Statement (3 pages)

- Specify research program goal(s)
- Describe process and methods
- Indicate intentions for societal impact
- Link goal(s) to alternative products and means of evaluation
- Discuss how alternative products combine with traditional products

Alternative Products and Means of Evaluation

- Specify alternative products
- Describe means of evaluation and evidence of impact
- Give rationale for each product and means of evaluation
- Provide rationale and goal statement for each product

External Evaluators

- Specify type of evaluator
- Provide rationale

Alternative Products and Evaluation - example

1. **Product.** Describes the entities and/or documents that will be created as a result of your research.
2. **Means of evaluation.** Indicate how the societal value and/or impact of the product will be evaluated and/or measured. Articulate what evidence will indicate value and/or impact. When evidence is quantitative and/or numerical, give a range rather than a single target.
3. **Rationale for product and means of evaluation.** Provide an explanation for why the product and means of evaluation demonstrate societal value and/or impact.
4. **Rationale and goal statement.** Briefly explain how the product and means of evaluation contribute to the goal of your research program, particularly in terms of the public good; give attention to how the product is engaging the public in its creation and/or use. The rationale should be short and can refer to the research statement.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH OPTION (PERO) Memorandum of Understanding			
ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTS AND MEANS OF EVALUATION			
PRODUCT (25-word limit per cell)	MEANS OF EVALUATION (75-word limit per cell)	RATIONALE FOR PRODUCT AND MEANS OF EVALUATION (75-word limit per cell)	RATIONALE AND GOAL STATEMENT (75-word limit per cell)

MOU Template Updated: 8/25/2024

External Evaluators – criteria for selection



1. *Two out of five external letters* will come from outside of academia, from individuals who can objectively evaluate the candidate's societal impact.
 1. Highly qualified in expertise and/or experience
 2. Objective, they do not benefit from the candidate's promotion and tenure
2. *Determine types of evaluators with EO and/or PERO Advisory Committee.* Review and assess appropriateness of the evaluator type.
3. *List the type of evaluator, not names in the MOU.* Later, in year 5, a list of external evaluators will include specific names, a practice similar to the traditional academic list, with enough names to provide anonymity.

TYPE OF EVALUATOR (25-word limit per cell)	RATIONALE FOR TYPE OF EVALUATOR (75-word limit per cell)

PERO Advisory Committee Reviews



- Committee focuses on two key questions
 - Is it public engagement research?
 - Is the alternative evaluation appropriate and reasonable?
- Candidate must respond to committee feedback
- **Not** a contract or guarantee of promotion and tenure
- Addendums are included in the MOU

Draft MOU to PERO Advisory Committee	PERO Advisory Committee Review Period	Feedback by PERO Advisory Committee to Candidate
September 15	October 1-15	November 16
October 15	November 1-15	December 16
February 15	March 1-15	April 16
April 15	May 1-15	June 16

PERO Selection Process & Timeline



Complete this Process Before
End of 3rd Year

By End of Year 3

Before Candidate
Submits List of
Evaluators (Year 5)



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PERO & FAA – Readiness for this Option

FAA Draft Policy on Evaluating Community-Engaged Scholarly and Creative Activity

This report looked at how community engaged research, teaching, and service should be defined and recognized in the hiring, mentoring, and promotion processes of the college and its units.

In many ways, engaged research is built into our culture and each of our disciplines may already have metrics to evaluate its value and impact.

FAA Strategic Goals & Priorities 2023-2028: Under Priority of Research and Create for the Benefit of All:

Goal #4: Strengthen faculty, staff, and student capacity for working in reciprocal scholarly and creative partnerships with the communities we serve.

"Guidance on Rewarding and Recognizing Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Arts" (Korner, O'Connor, Marks, Hamilton; Big Ten Arts Administrators, 2020).

This white paper provides guidance to administrators for including and recognizing engaged scholarship in the arts through its promotion and tenure processes.



Resources

- Public Engagement Research Option (PERO) Guide Ay 2024-2025
<https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/pero-guide/>
 - Overview, External Letters, Preparing the MOU, Guidance for Faculty Members, FAQs
- FAA Promotion and Tenure Policies & Procedures Guidelines, updated May 2024
<https://my.faa.illinois.edu/iframe.asp?url=https://faa.illinois.edu/promotion-and-tenure?content-only=1>
- Articles and reports on public engaged research available



Questions – Please contact Mary Pat McGuire, Dean's Fellow at mpm1@illinois.edu

- Process
- Critical deadlines
- P&T review discussions
- Literature and references
- Other





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