Collaborations for Tomorrow: Building University-in-Community Networks for University-with-Community Solutions

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Toward Higher Ground: New Visions, New Voices for the 21st Century
College Board Colloquium
Delray Beach, FL
January 12-14, 2009
Context for Engagement: Institutional Identity and Institutional Commitment (Carnegie Classification)

MSU Mission Statement

• strives to discover practical uses for theoretical knowledge and to speed the diffusion of information to residents of the state, the nation, and the world…

• is committed to emphasizing the applications of information; and contributing to the understanding and the solution of significant societal problems…
Definition of Outreach/Engagement

“Outreach (engaged scholarship) is a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions.”

Provost’s Committee on University Outreach
1993
As a university located within a community, Michigan State University is committed to working with communities to effect transformational change.
MSU Approach

- **Becoming Embedded in Communities**: Working in long-standing partnerships that are embedded in communities to identify the needs of families, businesses, neighborhoods and community organizations.

- **Stressing Asset-Based Solutions**: Focusing on asset-based solutions that build on the strengths and advantages of those we serve.

- **Building Community Capacity**: Building capacity within families, businesses and communities to address the challenges and build on the opportunities they face.

- **Creating Collaborative Networks**: Building networks among communities and organizations that lead to regional collaborations and innovations that are sustainable.
UOE Scholarship Based Approach to Campus-Community Partnerships
Building and Monitoring Access for Campus-Community Engagement
Traditional Approach to Change: Linear Modeling, Linear Thinking
When in Reality, Things Are Not Linear…

Foster-Fishman, 2007
System Level Community-Campus Partnerships

Power of We – connecting through a community network of networks

• A unique, sustainable model for capacity building and community improvement
• Committed to transforming Michigan’s capital area
• Co-transforming the linkages between community and campus
• Partnering with UOE to create Tools of Engagement
Power of We Consortium

• A “network of networks” that **brokers relationships, information, and resources** to tackle the community issues that are beyond the capacity of any single organization to address

• See [www.PowerofWe.org](http://www.PowerofWe.org) for a detailed description of the Power of We Consortium, its membership, and its goals and activities
Membership

- **Founding entities** (15), e.g. MSU, Capital Area United Way, City of Lansing, Ingham County Health Department, Lansing School District, Department of Human Services, CMH, etc.

- **Faith-based partners** (~10)

- **Community-based partners** (~25)

- **Community representatives** (~8)

- >100 affiliates
Goals

• Advance intellectual and social development

• Build a dynamic, diverse, and vibrant economy

• Promote physical and mental health

• Keep homes and communities safe by strengthening families and neighborhoods

• Steward natural resources

• Strengthen the sense of community cohesion by actively engaging residents in the change process
Five Community Practices
Developed through participatory research and with the support of the Kellogg Foundation

- Engaging and mobilizing community members
- Facilitating dialogue and creating connections
- Identifying and supporting civic leadership
- Using all of the assets of the community for change
- Sharing and using data and information to support and monitor progress
Key Accomplishments

• Provided access to healthcare for over 50% of the formerly uninsured in Ingham County

• Built and sustained a neighborhood-based system of community centers and community development initiatives that support grassroots change

• Engaged and mobilized residents in support of early childhood and youth development, reducing poverty, preventing substance abuse, and ending homelessness

• Assisted many faith-based and community organizations to build their own capacity
Six Outcome Focal Areas

- Intellectual and Social Development
- Health
- Environment
- Economy
- Safety
- Community Life
Examples of Coordinated and Leveraged Investment-Community Infrastructure

- **Neighborhood Revitalization**: Investing in neighborhood centers and their action plans for neighborhood revitalization

- **Nonprofit Sector**: Supporting faith-based and community organizations in building their own capacities through training, technical assistance, and grants

- **VISTA Members**: Organizing multi-year financing arrangements with the Corporation for National and Community Service in support of a pool of VISTA members that are placed throughout the community
Examples of Coordinated and Leveraged Investment-Community Infrastructure

• **Health Coverage for the Uninsured**: Outreach by community health workers financed through multiple sources of funding and carried out through braided contracts with community-based organizations

• **Early Childhood Development**: Development of a community system of care and supports for parents with young children

• **Youth Development**: A philanthropic venture led by the Community Foundation to mobilize, coordinate, and leverage public and private resources towards improved outcomes for at-risk youth
Birth-to-Work Initiative

Power of We Consortium
and Michigan State University
Systemic Perspective on Birth-to-Work Developmental Pathway

Power of We structure and community framework, MSU engagement structure, iterative dialogue processes, and cross-discipline understandings
Transitional State, Relationship Impacts

Assessing Proximal and Distal Causal Forces

**Proximal Influences**
- Partner Selections
- Workplace
- Society

**Proximal Influences**
- Peers
- School
- Community

**Proximal Influences**
- Parents
- Family (Kin)
- Neighborhood

**Distal Influences**
- Early Adolescence Stage (10-14)
- Late Adolescence Stage (18-25)

- Early Childhood Stage (0-5)

- Prenatal

Risk → Resilience
Transforming Dynamics of Community Collaboration

- Community collaborations including the University-in-Community partnership
- Working together strategies and practices
  - Organizing propositions from iterative dialogue
  - Evidence-based practices from cross-discipline understandings
Power of We

MSU

BTW

LEAP (business)

State and Regional Government
Example of Campus-Community Program Development

Community Neighborhood Association Leader
[has aspirations and ideas]

MSU Researchers
[performing research – issues related to the use of IT]

MSU Dept. of Computer Science and Engineering

Interdisciplinary Team of Researchers

Engagement Occurs
Result: ITEC

Partners
[From community, business, education, and government]
**Steps Taken by the Interdisciplinary Team**

**Interdisciplinary Team of Researchers**

- **Major objectives**
  - Conduct innovative research
  - Enhance users’ skills in technology and technology disciplines
  - Develop applications for community business partners

**Takes action!**

- **Team decides how to organize**
  - Involves community, MSU units, Spartan Internet, Prima Civitas
    - Choices:
      - Set up as a university research laboratory?
      - Set up as an independent nonprofit corporation?

- **Decide what to do? What programs?**
  - Emphasize afterschool programs that promote science, technology, engineering and math skills in children
    - Delivery system to use? Educational computer games (Alice)

- **Develops business plan to become self-sustaining**
  - Involve government, workforce development agencies, community foundations, Lansing School District, Capital Area IT Council, etc.
Research Process, Technology Transfer, and Benefits

Carried out by the interdisciplinary team of faculty researchers

Basic Research

Applied Research

Technology Transfer

- Spin-off to private company
- Develops marketable product
- Delivers to school for implementation

Community Benefits

- Skilled workforce
- Stimulate innovation
- Afterschool activities

University Benefits

- Contracts and grants
- Better relationship with partners
- Community valuing MSU
- Fulfills land-grant mission

innovation new products

new ideas new processes
Successful Campus-Community Partnerships

- Share a common vision
- Share agreement about goals and strategies
- Have mutual trust and respect
- Share power and responsibility
- Communicate clearly and listen carefully
- Understand and empathize one another’s circumstances
- Remain flexible, with eye on the target
- Achieve mutual benefits
- Enhance community partner’s capacity for self sufficiency
- Enhance faculty member’s scholarly career
Who Does This Work?

- Faculty and Academic Specialists: 2300 of 4200
- Graduate students: With faculty mentors
- Undergraduate students:
  - 15,000 placed through the Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement (200 courses, plus volunteers)
  - Unknown number enrolled in independent research courses
- Community partners worldwide
University Outreach and Engagement

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