

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Indiana University Northwest

Project Details		
Title	Institutionalizing Community Engagement	Status ACTIVE
Category	9-Building Collaborative Relationships	Updated
Timeline		Reviewed
	Planned Project Kickoff 09-01-2011	Created 09-06-2011
	Target Completion 12-31-2014	Version 1

1: Project Goal

A: IU Northwest intends to institutionalize a culture of community engagement utilizing the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching *Elective Classification for Community Engagement* as a framework. The Carnegie Foundation describes community engagement as the “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.” This framework requires that institutions document substantial commitments in the categories of Curricular Engagement and Outreach & Partnerships. While the university may actually seek this classification that, in and of itself, is not the goal. Rather, we will use the framework provided by the Carnegie Foundation to analyze our existing engagement efforts as well as strengthen and inform future engagement experiences.

2: Reasons For Project

A: Chancellor Wm. Lowe became the IU Northwest Chancellor in July 2010. He made clear that community engagement was one of his highest priorities for the campus. Although IU Northwest is already very committed to the communities we serve, this Action Project is an opportunity to reflect continuous improvement in our engagement efforts. In early 2011, the campus undertook a new strategic planning process that resulted in six strategic priorities. One of them is the following: “**Community engagement is the hallmark of our commitment to advancing educational opportunities while addressing regional priorities.** The scholarship of faculty and student engagement results in a stronger economic and cultural impact in our region while simultaneously strengthening experiential learning. Our collaborative engagement with Northwest Indiana communities supports sustainable progress, addressing greater opportunities for diversity in our students and workforce, and providing a valuable context for the complete student. Our student, faculty, and staff commitments go beyond their institutional roles to an active engagement with external organizations and groups.”

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: This Action Project will involve the entire campus and most organizational units including the Chancellor’s Office, Academic Affairs, Student Services Administration, and Administrative Affairs.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: This Action Project has the potential to improve our processes of systematic data collection and continuous improvement, the processes of curricular design and redesign, program/operational planning, and recognition and reward, among others.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: Changing the culture of our institution so as to make community engagement a pervasive element will take time. We will need to plan how to systematically collect, analyze and use particular data, using the Carnegie Classification Documentation Framework as a model. For instance, data must be collected regarding partnerships and engagement, and also on the impact of that engagement on the institution, the community, the students, and the faculty/staff. We must develop a coordinating infrastructure, examine our reward and recognition processes, define the role of service-learning in academic programs, and develop appropriate mechanisms of assessment of the results of any programmatic/curricular changes related to community engagement. We will also need to attend to

our internal and external communication processes to ensure that our efforts are recognized by the communities we serve. By the very nature of our desire to make engagement ****pervasive**** it is difficult at the outset to define every necessary milestone. An early step will be for the Director of our Center for Urban and Regional Excellence and our Assistant Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness and Research to assemble a coordinating team to begin examining best practices for systematically collecting and using data of the type necessary for this endeavor. This will include not only a review of the literature, but also possibly exploring the experiences of our peer universities and/or other universities in the state of Indiana who have achieved Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (California State at San Marcos, Indiana State University, University of Southern Indiana, Purdue University, and Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis). Exploring how to best pervade faculty governance will also be a priority as faculty recognition and reward processes may be affected; faculty development and support for curricular and course redesign is also critical. A review of staff development and reward mechanisms must be done. Our first tangible milestone after the development of a coordinating infrastructure will be a sort of "sub-strategic" plan for the institutionalization of community engagement that makes explicit our goals/objectives, a timeline, responsible people/positions, and action steps. Our next milestone will be a systematic plan for the collection, analysis, and use of data for documenting the extent and impact of our engagement efforts. As we just implemented our new General Education Program in 2010, we will likely use one of our five existing learning outcomes "Ethics and Citizenship" as a stepping off point for curriculum and/or course design where necessary and desirable.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: We have been very successful in the past keeping the campus informed and aware of AQIP Action Projects. In fact, simply by making an initiative an Action Project has served us well in focusing campus attention and effort to the initiative. We will publicize the Action Project on our website, in the monthly Northwest News e-newsletter, and through the faculty and staff listserv. Additionally, we have standing agenda items in the IU Northwest Council and in the Faculty Organization meetings related to Continuous Improvement and/or AQIP. We also will update the campus and the community at large via the Chancellor's webpage, on which there is a "Community Engagement" link.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Under the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement the first stage of the documentation process requires institutions to provide a set of entry or foundational indicators, as supporting evidence of *Institutional Identity and Culture* and *Institutional Commitment to community engagement*. *Institutional Identity and Culture, as well as Institutional Commitment are demonstrated when the institution successfully embraces the indicators outlined in the classification application.*

Indiana University Northwest will demonstrate the following outcomes related to making progress toward readiness to make application for the classification:

- Actually developing measureable outcomes will be a first milestone for this project. The campus needs to examine where we are and where we need and want to be in terms of community engagement vis-à-vis the Carnegie Classification.
- The infrastructure and leadership of this initiative will be identified and created. Currently it is thought the leadership will be the Center for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE). At this time CURE has an interim director who will take initial leadership of this AP.
- An inventory of all current engagement activities will be the first measure that will indicate we are moving forward in a positive way on this project.
- Subsequently we will measure the number of engagement activities; the depth and length of those activities; the number of students, faculty and staff involved in community engagement activities both within and without the university umbrella; etc. Additionally, we hope that a more coordinated engagement effort will reduce duplicative activities and allow us to allocate our human capital in ways that have the most benefit to the community. Additional important measures could be the hours of faculty time spent on outreach activities, annual amount of funding for outreach, number of new IU Northwest students that participated in our outreach programs.
- We already administer the NSSE every three years, and so will monitor questions related to community engagement and service learning. Additionally, in spring of 2012 we will administer for the first time the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) to get faculty perceptions of student involvement in the community.
- CURE, the Office of Marketing and Communication, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research will work together to create a meaningful assessment of our visibility and engagement
- Systematically working through the Carnegie Classification Documentation Framework as our framework for assessment will move us toward achievement of the goals of this A.P. This will include, among other things, an assessment of curricular integration.

- Once the assessment is completed, the university will determine set of recommendations and action priorities for producing an institutional identify and culture consistent with the Carnegie community engagement classification.