COPC CENTRAL

Engaged Colleges Are Central to Strong Communities

Students Win When Universities Engage

Although community engagement activities benefit colleges and their community partners, the biggest winners often are students. Engagement activities help bring course work alive, broaden students' horizons, and help make informed career decisions.

GIS mapping opens the door. A talent for GIS mapping helped Ruth Feathers obtain an internship with the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation (OPDC) while pursuing a master's degree in public policy and management at the University of Pittsburgh. What Feathers learned about Oakland while updating an OPDC database helped her land her current job as coordinator for the Oakland Community Council, a local advocacy group. Feathers also teaches at the Community College of Allegheny County, where she is using her COPC experience to design community projects for her students.

"These projects are a tremendous way to get my students involved in their neighborhoods, as well as giving me practical ways to illustrate what they've learned in the classroom," says Feathers. "COPC has been truly a wonderful experience for me."

Applying lessons broadly. A social work practicum with the Office of Neighborhood Resources at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)

COPCs Make Long-Term Commitment to Community Engagement

Efforts by the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) to help its community partners revitalize the blight-stricken West Philadelphia neighborhood have helped reduce crime rates, increase homeownership, and enhance local educational resources. Although these results are impressive, what sets the Penn experience apart from traditional campus-community interactions is that the university has no intention of pulling its faculty, students, or financial resources out of West Philadelphia, even after its COPC grant funds run out.

Penn's long-term commitment to community engagement is a fairly new phenomenon among institutions of higher education (IHEs). Before 1990, many universities and colleges ventured into their neighborhoods only for short-term, university-designed activities that involved more charity than collaboration. But following the example of Penn and other "engaged" colleges and universities, a growing number of IHEs are making a concerted effort to permanently connect their teaching, research, and institutional missions to the outside world.

All the partners in an effective community-campus collaboration have much to gain from this "scholarship of engagement," a term coined by educator Ernest Boyer in 1990. Barbara A. Holland, former director of the Office of University Partnerships (OUP), suggests that engaged colleges and

universities are able to graduate better educated professionals who take with them practical experience in solving community problems. The neighborhood improvements that result from those experiences, in turn, allow IHEs to attract students and faculty to inner-city campuses that might have been perceived as unsafe. Community stakeholders benefit too, from the significant financial, academic, and political resources that universities and colleges can bring to local revitalization efforts.

There is one important caveat, however: Experience has shown that to be an effective community partner, a college or university must make a long-term commitment to its community. Holland maintains that community stakeholders need to know that their academic partners are "in it for the long haul," not just for a semester, an academic year, or the funding cycle of the latest grant. In addition, a university or college must make sure that its commitment to engagement is clearly evident in its actions as well as its words.

This issue of *COPC Central* reports on the actions that some colleges and universities have taken to "institutionalize" community engagement by making it a permanent part of their administrative structures and academic programs. Some schools do this by creating administrative offices or positions that are dedicated to fostering the

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university's partnership efforts. Others adopt official policies to ensure that the college will hire local residents or purchase goods from neighborhood merchants. Many incorporate community-based learning activities into their graduate and undergraduate coursework and independent study. The most committed IHEs eventually begin taking a faculty member's community work into account when making promotion or tenure decisions.

COPCs were never envisioned simply as a vehicle for providing services to distressed communities, according to *Colleges and Communities: Gateway to the American Dream,* a 2000 HUD report on the status of the COPC program. Instead, the COPC program transfers to communities the tools they need to revitalize themselves. That is why institutionalization has been a major goal for COPCs since OUP was established in 1994. Institutionalization ensures that communities can use revitalization tools year after year—independent of any particular grant program—to help residents build a better future for themselves and their neighbors.

"Through institutionalization, community engagement becomes not something that universities and colleges do, but something that defines who they are," says Holland. "Through institutionalization, an IHE decides that community engagement is so central to its mission that it must change the way it does business and how it perceives the outside world." ◆

Universities Make Community Service Part of the Curriculum

Whether studying local issues or actively working to improve neighborhood conditions, students at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Loyola University Chicago, the University of Vermont (UVM), and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) are getting hooked on service. That is exactly what university faculty and administrators had in mind when they instituted special courses to help students broaden their personal and professional horizons while working to improve their communities.

UALR. "First Year Experience," a three-credit freshman class, is part of a program designed to help incoming students acquire study skills and learn to achieve. The class, which includes 20 hours of community service, is not a required course, says Joni Lee, associate vice chancellor for university advancement. However, first-year students are encouraged to enroll and take advantage of placements that Lee's office arranges with such partners as the Arkansas Children's Hospital, the American Red Cross, and public elementary schools.

"We do this to try to hook the freshmen," says Lee. "We try to use it to get them involved in volunteerism."

Once they complete their required service hours, many students continue to volunteer on their own time, often completing internships with the COPC, says Lee. Others enroll in the Friday-Sturgis Leadership Program, where they perform 250 hours of community service during their junior and senior years and complete a 10-week paid internship during the summer months. Program participants have worked on a variety of community projects.

"The goal is to create community leaders who, after they graduate, will live in this community and take pride in it," Lee says.

Loyola University Chicago. Whereas UALR targets first-year students with its service-oriented curriculum, Loyola University Chicago has established a three-course Urban Studies certification program that helps experienced undergraduates find solutions to urban problems. The program includes a seminar featuring guest speakers who discuss community issues, and a hands-on community research course. For their third program course, students can choose from among several urban studies courses, including a course that examines Chicago's history.

David Van Zytveld, assistant director of Loyola's Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL), says the seminar and research course are tied together whenever possible.

"We really try to bring in community leaders who are familiar with the day-to-day reality of issues in their neighborhoods," he says about the seminar course. "And we try to pick topics (for the seminar) that dovetail with the research" that students will conduct during their hands-on course. A recent research project focused on domestic violence, so that semester's list of topics included domestic violence education.

Van Zytveld says that students are often attracted to the Urban Studies program because it is, in reality, an internship. Research conducted in the program does not take place in the library, he says. Its purpose is not to get published, but to provide some benefit to the community.

"We are pushing solutions, not just describing problems," says Van Zytveld. "We are trying to show students what it takes to make solutions happen, and how they might be involved in this type of work beyond the course." Projects have included

Congratulations to all the 2002 COPC grantees.

For a complete list of all the new grantees and descriptions of their projects, please see the OUP Web site at www.oup.org.

Office of University Partnerships

a welfare reform study that spanned 3 years and 6 semesters, resulting in the restoration of $10 million in state benefits for elderly immigrants.

UVM. Immigrants also benefited from research that UVM undergraduates conducted during a service-learning course offered through the university's Impacts Project. Each semester builds on research conducted in previous sessions, according to COPC Co-Director Richard Schramm. During the class's first two semesters, students met with the project's community advisory committee and researched topics of interest to that committee. By the third semester, the class had been divided into two groups. One focused on UVM's purchasing policies and examined how the university could buy more goods locally. The other group looked at ways to increase employment opportunities for local workers, many of whom are Bosnian and Vietnamese immigrants.

"This has really been fun, putting the community and the university together on this project," says Schramm. "We did not just set out to 'do good' in the community as we at the university define it. But the course has combined applied research and student-community education in a way I've never experienced before. This is very rewarding for teachers and students alike. They find that this is an entirely new way of learning and they really value it. They know they are doing valuable work."

As a result of work done in the class, UVM is considering the adoption of a targeted "Buy Vermont" policy to increase local purchasing. It also has established several programs to help local residents gain employment at the university.

UIC. The two-semester urban planning program at UIC also involves students in hands-on research that benefits the community.

UIC graduate students take a first-semester development finance class and then move on to a second-semester studio class in which the actual research occurs. This research has allowed community organizations to complete projects that they once did not know how to start, says Nacho Gonzalez, coordinator of the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative at the Great Cities Institute.

"A good example is the Interfaith Organizing Project, a local community development corporation," says Gonzalez. "They wanted to form a construction company to build low-income housing, but they didn't know how to go about it or even if it would work."

To assist the project, UIC students wrote a report that compared how two other local organizations had approached the task of establishing a construction company. One organization, which operated in a Mexican community, formed a cooperative in which the workers could perform work under the direction of a general contractor. The other organization took a conventional approach to creating a full-fledged construction company. Although the students concluded that both organizations used good models, the Interfaith Organizing Project used the report to decide that the conventional model best suited its needs.

For more information on the program at UALR, contact Joni Lee, associate vice chancellor for university advancement, at (501) 569–3186; at Loyola University Chicago, contact David Van Zytveld, assistant director, CURL, at (312) 915–8629; at UVM, contact Richard Schramm, COPC co-director, at (802) 656–0292; and at UIC, contact Nacho Gonzalez, coordinator, UIC Neighborhoods Initiative, at (312) 996–8700. ◆

did not lead Amanda Finney directly to her first job. But it taught her lessons that she is applying to that job.

For two academic semesters while pursuing a master's degree in social work, Finney worked with the Westside Education Task Force in Indianapolis to plan a new elementary school being built in the community. The project involved organizing various partners, including the Indianapolis Public Schools, IUPUI, Westside Community Organization, and multiple grassroots groups. Now Finney continues to interact with multiple partners as she works in a community mental health agency that serves homeless people suffering from mental health and substance dependence disorders.

"Working with the Office of Neighborhood Resources gave me hands-on experience that I utilize daily in working across client systems," says Finney. "I gained a more holistic perspective by utilizing multiple community resources to assist persons in need."

Sense of fulfillment. Sometimes, community work gives students a greater sense of purpose about their chosen career field. Todd Wolcott's job as a research assistant at a Community Technology Center established by the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) helped him find the fulfillment he says was missing from other jobs.

"My past career experience was working with the technology side of nonprofits," says Wolcott, who is a UIC graduate student. "I knew that I was doing good work, but I never really got to see the end results. Now, working directly with community-based organizations and community residents has given me a much broader perspective. I have a much better understanding of the issues now than I ever did working in an office." ◆

OUP is pleased to release *Lasting Engagement: Building and Sustaining a Commitment to Community Outreach, Development and Collaboration,* Springfield College, Volume 1, the first in a series of case studies that takes an indepth look at how some COPC grantees have institutionalized their community partnerships. The series is intended to provide guidance to other institutions of higher education that are just starting out on their quest for community engagement.

For additional information or to order copies see *www.oup.org* or call 800–245–2691.

Careful Planning, Coordination Characterize Moves Toward Institutionalization

No college or university institutionalizes its support for community outreach in just one step. The process of defining a learning institution's mission and goals—and identifying how to accomplish them—evolves over time. Current efforts under way at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) illustrate three distinct steps involved in implementing a long-term commitment to community engagement.

Pitt. At Pitt, the institutionalization process is currently in a planning phase that began in March 2001 when the university held a plenary on civic engagement and accepted its report.

"We tried to pull together everyone who is interested in institutionalization," says Tracy Soska, COPC co-director. "Now, we're trying to pull together the work of the different groups."

To date, the planning process has resulted in a university decision to create a center that will serve as the hub of community outreach activities. Dr. Jean Ferketish, Pitt's assistant chancellor, says that Pitt is now trying to figure out what type of center the school needs.

"We aren't even as far as a staffing plan or even a name," says Ferketish. "I do see it as a formal center, staffed with people who have a lot of expertise and are able to help communities diagnose their own needs. Then, once a need is identified, we have to decide how we turn the need into a project that the students are looking for. It's almost like matchmaking between service-learning needs and community needs."

Partnerships that extend both into the community and across campus will be the key element of Pitt's community engagement, says Soska. An Internet database, which will be launched in fall 2002, will play an important role in bringing those partners together by enabling people from both inside and outside the university to learn more about existing campus service-learning opportunities. Ongoing planning will, no doubt, help Pitt add to these opportunities.

"It's not a question of, 'Are we going to institutionalize?'" says Soska. "It's a question of, 'What will it look like when we do it?' We have only one chance to do this at this institution, and we want to do it right."

Georgia Tech. A similarly careful planning process led to the development of a four-way cooperative among Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, Clark Atlanta University, and Emory University. Georgia Tech and Georgia State, joint recipients of a COPC grant, have taken the lead in organizing the project, but all four Atlanta-based research universities bring a wealth of resources to the joint venture.

Governed by a steering committee that includes presidents of the four universities, the cooperative is working on a memorandum of understanding with the Atlanta public school system for its first major project. Beginning in fall 2002, the universities will provide supplemental programming for Atlanta's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, through which the school system provides homework assistance and other planned after-school programs. The universities will provide additional assistance at multiple middle school sites.

"It's a wonderful match-up with things that the four universities do as a matter of course," says COPC Director Larry Keating. "For example, we here at Georgia Tech specialize in computer geeks. We can do tutoring. We can do troubleshooting. We can teach classes."

The four-university cooperative will not take over programs already provided by the public school system, says Keating. A series of community meetings will ensure that any new activities respond to community needs.

"Having worked with the community for a long time, we know to go slowly and make sure they get what they want," he says.

IUPUI. Pitt and Georgia Tech will eventually follow in the footsteps of IUPUI and operate full-blown community outreach programs. The university established its Office of Neighborhood Resources (ONR) in 1997 with one full-time paid employee, one full-time volunteer, and one graduate student. ONR staff now consists of two full-time employees, several graduate students, and countless student and faculty volunteers who implement a number of community outreach programs. For example, 2 full-time AmeriCorps members administer an America Reads program, which places 75 student workstudy tutors in the community each year.

"We've just grown incredibly," says ONR Coordinator Meg Easter-Dawson. "We guide service learning and other service-based activities to make it a positive experience for the faculty and for students."

In coordinating outreach activities, ONR works closely with WESCO, an umbrella organization formed by the communities of Haughville, Hawthorne, and Stringtown. These Indianapolis neighborhoods, which have diverse populations and various types of housing, provide IUPUI students with varied service-learning opportunities.

Although it is a COPC grantee, ONR was able to secure its own line item in the university budget before its HUD funds arrived. The university pays all staff salaries for the office, which is now part of the university's Center for Service and Learning. The center also houses the Office of Service Learning and the Office of Community Service.

"It's nice to know we're not a fly-by-night organization," says Easter-Dawson. "[This] was our mantra from the beginning: If we get a partnership going with our neighbors, it has to be institutionalized, or we'll be right back where we started."

For more information on Pitt and its developing center, contact Tracy Soska, COPC co-director, at (412) 624–6320; on Georgia Tech's cooperative, contact Larry Keating, COPC director, at (404) 894–0642; and on IUPUI's Office of Neighborhood Resources, contact Meg Easter-Dawson, ONR coordinator, at (317) 278–3474. ◆

Other Examples of Institutionalization

Numerous colleges and universities across the country are in the process of institutionalizing their community partnerships. A few examples follow:

■ All 450 freshmen at **Lynchburg College** in Lynchburg, Virginia, must complete a 2-hour community service requirement before their first year ends. Almost half the class opts to participate in a COPC-sponsored "Freshmen Make a Difference Day" held on several fall Saturdays. Students donate a morning or afternoon to clear vacant lots, spruce up a historic cemetery, or help Habitat for Humanity build homes.

■ The **University of West Florida** in Pensacola is developing a concentration in sustainable community development that will soon be added to its Master of Public Administration program. The four courses that make up the concentration will also be available as a certificate program for students who are not pursuing a master's degree.

■ The **University of Michigan–Flint (UM–Flint)** has created a permanent administrative office to manage its university-community partnerships. The Center for Service Learning and School Partnerships provides support to elementary and secondary schools in the Flint area. It also coordinates academic service-learning and community service programs for UM–Flint students.

■ The Office of Center Operations and Community Services (CoSERVE) is an umbrella for 20 outreach centers at the **University of Texas–Pan American** in Edinburg. CoSERVE provides education, training, and professional expertise to the local, state, national, and international communities.

■ The Community Development Academy at the **University of North Carolina at Charlotte** provides the opportunity for university faculty, students, and staff to work with community organizations and groups on community outreach projects. The university also has a Web site that community groups and faculty members can use to "link up" with one another. Community groups use the site to identify specific community needs as well as projects that would help meet those needs. Faculty members log on to the site to specify community engagement projects in which their classes would like to participate.

■ New guidelines used by **Springfield College** in Springfield, Massachusetts, now identify the various forms of service that will be considered when a faculty member's tenure and promotion decisions are made. The revised criteria state that to be promoted, faculty members must have demonstrated effectiveness in teaching and made substantial contributions in the areas of scholarly endeavor, professional service, college service, and community service.

■ The **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign** supports public scholarship through its guidelines for promotion and tenure. The Office of Continuing Education has worked with the Senate Committee on Continuing Education and Public Service to establish a faculty guide for planning and evaluating public service activities.

■ Promotion and tenure standards at the **University of Toledo** in Toledo, Ohio, include a requirement that faculty members commit a minimum of 10 percent of their time to university-community service. ◆

FAU-CURE Uses COPC Foundation To Build Community Training and Outreach Programs

There is always a deadline, always a new project to be planned at Florida Atlantic University's Center for Urban Redevelopment and Empowerment (FAU-CURE) in Fort Lauderdale. And, according to Program Director Venesia Thompson, the center's five staff members like it that way.

Established in 1994 by the Florida Board of Regents—the governing body for state universities—FAU-CURE provides training and outreach programs for residents of low-income communities in Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, and St. Lucie Counties. Since FAU-CURE's inception, the state has covered its operating costs. The COPC grant that Florida Atlantic University received in 1998 "helped us to do a little bit more, to become more organized."

Before receiving the COPC grant, FAU-CURE offered programs at only two or three partner sites, all located in Broward County. After receiving the grant, the university was able to add more sites and expand its programs into additional counties along the Interstate 95 corridor. FAU-CURE also improved its infrastructure, revised its adult curriculum, started a youth program, and used newspaper and radio promotions to increase local participation in its programs.

"COPC helped put us on the road to sustainability," Thompson says. "The grant helped lay the foundation and we took it from there. COPC came along just when we were ready to do more."

Since 1998 FAU-CURE has used additional grants and other funding sources to expand its programs even further. The center now offers training programs, at no cost to participants, in the following areas:

- Microenterprise development.
- Grant writing.
- Homebuyer education.
- Neighborhood organization.
- Nonprofit administration and management.
- Computer skills training.

Although program participants do not receive college credits for completing a training program, they do earn completion certificates that often help them accomplish important goals. For example, an individual who completes 20 hours of business training can use his or her completion certificate to obtain a business loan. Likewise, a participant on a job interview can show that he or she has received 12 weeks of computer training.

Strong community partners. FAU-CURE counts community-based organizations—including recreation centers, faith-based organizations, libraries, schools, and hospitals—among its many partners. These partners, which provide sites for FAU-CURE training sessions, are the program's "strong point," says Thompson.

"It wouldn't be feasible to bring everyone into our center," she says. "But these organizations have earned the community's trust. As a result, these partnerships have allowed us to maximize our service delivery. We've just been very blessed to have dependable partners."

FAU-CURE generates income by offering technical support to local governments. The center conducts market research, affordable housing studies, and needs assessment studies. It also sponsors an annual Microenterprise Regional Conference and a Human Social Services Forum on such topics as "Predatory Lending." Once a month, state legislators, local government officials, educators, businesspeople, members of civic groups, and others gather for a Minority Economic Think Tank. Discussion topics for the think tank have included "HIV/ AIDS in the Local Community," "Economic Barriers to Ending Homelessness," and "Barriers Facing Small and Minority Business Owners."

For more information on how FAU-CURE coordinates Florida Atlantic University's community programs, contact Venesia Thompson, program director, at (954) 762–5697. ◆