The Engaged University

A Presentation to the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs & Personnel Committee
NIU Board of Trustees
November 12, 2009
December, 2008: NIU recognized for Community Engagement in Outreach and Partnerships but not in Curricular Engagement

One of 195 institutions across the country
Community Engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions 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.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2006
What We Mean by Engagement

- Mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources
- Continuous, region-wide access to research, artistry, and scholarship
- Deeper civic and academic learning for both partners and enriched scholarship in a context of reciprocity
- Enhancement of community well-being and of the future of the university
Engagement: A Central University Function

National Context for Engagement

- Stewards of Place, Making Place Matter
  AASCU, 2002
- Carnegie Awards, 2007
- Transformational Regional Engagement, 2008
- APLU (CI CEP) Metrics, 2009
Kellogg Commission “new covenant”

- Better respond to the current needs of an increasingly diverse student body
- Provide those students with more practical opportunities to prepare for the real world, and
- Put university knowledge and expertise to work on community problems.

NASULGC, 1999
Stewards of Place

• A guide for university leaders

• The language of engagement
  – Place-related
  – Interactive
  – Mutually beneficial
  – Integrated

AASCU, 2007
Carnegie: The Company We Keep

- Arizona State
- Duke
- Michigan State
- Ohio State
- Penn State
- Purdue
- UI UC
- Virginia Tech
- Wisconsin

- Akron
- Bowling Green
- Eastern Michigan
- Kent State
• APLU’s Council on Engagement and Outreach (CEO)

• Goal is a tool kit to help university faculty and staff work with education, government and private partners in coordinated efforts to transform the prosperity of a region through education, economic, workforce, and community development
Engagement Metrics

• APLU’s Commission on Innovation, Competitiveness and Economic Prosperity

• CICEP has been working for the past 18 months on additional measures to define institutional contributions to society

• NIU a pilot institution on assessment of economic engagement

• NSF funding for January workshop
Historical Model of University Life

Separate Silos

Teaching  Research  Public Service
• Discovery, Learning, Engagement:
  A direct, two-way interaction where partners learn together, discover new knowledge, and achieve mutual benefits.

Our teaching, learning and research activities are strengthened through collaborative knowledge-exchange relationships.
Engagement: A Central University Function at NIU

NIU Context for Engagement

- Strategic Plan, 2008: Regional and global impact
- Engaged learning Engagement initiatives, 2009
- Curricular engagement application, 2010
NIU Commitment to Engagement

Present throughout university strategic plan
A Defining Institutional Value

“A commitment to engagement and public purpose that simultaneously embraces local needs and global opportunities.”

Strategic Planning Imperative #3

“Strengthen and extend NIU’s regional and global impact.”
What is the Difference between Engagement and Outreach?
Engagement Projects and Initiatives

- Center for P-20 Engagement
- Wright School, DHS
- Community Cares Clinic
- NI UNet
- Rural HealthNet
- Baccalaureate Completion
- EI GERlab and ROCK
- Community Collaboration, Inc.
- PASCAL/ Pure
The Center supports partnerships related to education and training in schools, workplaces, and community settings at all levels from preschool (P) through graduate studies (20+) and life-long learning.
P-20 Initiative: Designed Wright
P-20 Initiative: LAS, COE, HHS, VPA
Community Cares Clinic

NIU and Kish Health Systems
Technology: NIUNet
Technology and Healthcare

Illinois Rural HealthNet
Improving health care through connectivity
Baccalaureate Completion

- Bachelor’s degree programs on 10 community college campuses
- Nursing at Harper
- BSAM - CLAS, COB
PASCAL International

Studying ways 2- and 4- year institutions can work together to further economic development
Community Collaboration, Inc.

- CGS, ITS, and eLearning Services worked with Rockford social service agencies

- Developed software to integrate records of homeless in that community
Next Step: Curricular Engagement

- The northern Illinois region is a veritable living laboratory for every conceivable type of study.

- NSSE reports that 51% of seniors participate in off-campus, experience-based learning activities.

- The majority of our students come from and return to this region, multiplying the engagement effect many times over.
Engaged Learning: LAS, HHS

- Geography majors created a “Hunger Map” of northern Illinois
- Students in Family, Consumer and Nutrition Sciences created a report on “food insecurity”
Engaged Learning: Law
Engaged Learning: CEET

Engineering students and professors are working to make locomotives more fuel efficient as part of a “greener railroads” project.
Engaged Learning: LAS, COE, VPA

Students spend five days per week at PDS sites, taking NIU classes and working in classrooms.
Evidence of Impacts of Engaged Learning

- Improved retention
- Increased academic content knowledge
- Improved higher order thinking skills, understanding complex problems
- Confident choice of major/career
- Personal outcomes - self-esteem, empowerment, motivation
- Social outcomes - pro-social behaviors, multicultural skills, interest in community issues, civic life
2009 Engagement Initiatives

• National Engagement Academy
  Brad Bond and Lemuel Watson

• Center for P-20 Engagement
  Lemuel Watson,
  Executive Director

• Regional Engagement/ Rockford
  Rena Cotsones,
  Assistant Vice-President
2009 Engagement Initiatives

• Central database to collect, monitor, and provide access to engagement activities
  – NIU Outreach, Provost’s Office, Assessment Office, Student Affairs, Public Affairs, Center for P-20 Engagement

• Pilot of APLU economic engagement metrics

• Engaged Learning
  – New engaged learning programs in 2010 will include campus-wide learning communities for incoming freshmen and enhanced and expanded undergraduate research programs.
  – Carnegie application for Curricular Engagement
Why Promote Engagement?

- Enrollment
- Retention
- Transformative Regional Engagement

“...brings together university, education, government, and private partners in coordinated efforts to transform the prosperity of a region through education, economic, workforce, and community development.”
What would it take for NIU to achieve national prominence as a research institution?

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Source: NSF
What would it take for NIU to achieve national prominence as an engaged institution?

- Expansion of what NIU does best
- Relentless promotion of engagement activities
- Leadership in national organizations
What is the role of higher education in regional and global stewardship?

“We are at a tipping point. We can respond to the realities and challenges threatening America and be a well-spring of solutions, or we can reside as a 20th Century relic doing business as usual.”
An Engaged University