NIU Outreach at Ten: A Legacy of Engagement

A Report to the
Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee
NIU Board of Trustees
March 3, 2011
1950s and 1960s

NIU offers state’s most extensive array of off-campus academic programming, responding to needs of rapidly expanding regional population.

1966 - College of Continuing Education created; brings non-credit adult education, conferencing, registration services for students-at-large, a community service program and off-campus credit programs together in one unit.
1990

College of Continuing Education eliminated.

Program staff placed in academic colleges; back-office functions like registration, scheduling, marketing and online course development managed by a Director of Continuing Education
History & Developments

1991 - 2000


Outreach and engagement initiatives left to the individual interests and contacts of each center director.
1995

NASULGC launches study on future of higher education.

Blue-ribbon panel spends 4 years studying role of public higher ed; issues six “Kellogg Reports” calling for renewal of partnership between universities and communities.
2001

NIU President John Peters creates the Division of Administration and Outreach

Combines 12 units into strengthened, coordinated division under a single vice president

No additional financial investment required
Support functions, regional centers, WNI U/ WNI J, applied research and economic development all come together in concentrated focus on region.

Link with ITS offers unique synergies, expanding opportunities for learning and regional development as well as serving on-campus functions.
National Context

- Kellogg Commission (NASULGC)
- “Stewards of Place” report (AASCU)
  - Engagement is place-related
  - Interactive
  - Mutually beneficial
  - Integrated
National Context

• Carnegie Foundation engagement awards established in 2007

• Transformational Regional Engagement toolkit developed by APLU (formerly NASULGC) in 2008 to help universities work with schools, government & private partners to transform prosperity of a region

• APLU calls for development of metrics by which institutions can gauge level of engagement with the areas they serve (2009)
President calls for development of P-20 center to coordinate university initiatives across continuum from pre-school through graduate school (2002)
NIU Strategic Plan calls for greater regional and global impact (2008)
Carnegie Foundation recognizes NIU as an Engaged Institution for Outreach and Partnerships (2008)
NIU serves as pilot institution to test APLU assessment of economic engagement (2009)
Assistant Vice President for Regional Engagement in Rockford appointed (2009)
NIU designated as North American node for PASCAL, an international consortium focused on regional approaches to development (2009)
President establishes Presidential Engagement Professors award (parallels presidential teaching and research awards)
NIU Context

Carnegie Foundation recognizes NIU for Curricular Engagement (2010)
NIU receives $68.5 million grant to extend broadband access across region (largest grant in NIU history)
Illinois Campus Compact and McCormick Foundation provide funding to develop campus-wide leadership for civic engagement efforts (2011)
President’s reorganization paralleled national trends:

- Kellogg Reports
- APLU priorities
- Carnegie designations
- National emphasis on broadband development
President’s creation of new division:

Supported expansion to serve regional needs in P-20 education, healthcare, government, business and telecommunications
President’s creation of new division:

- Institutionalized university-wide collaboration on community engagement activities
President’s creation of new division:

- Increased national and international visibility - NIU now positioned among top public universities; eligible and attractive for more public investment
Impact

President’s creation of new division:

- Strengthened NIU’s claim to the region
President’s creation of new division:

- Established strong organization to support and advocate for this critical mission
Conclusion

• President created a new function whose time has arrived.

• Division name change to Outreach, Engagement and Information Technologies underscores university commitment to these functions and recognizes their synergies.

• Success of division comes from President’s vision and commitment to making NIU one of the nation’s premier regional public universities.