Reorganizing University Outreach: NIU’s Progress Toward Engagement

University Continuing Education Association
San Antonio, Texas
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Continuing Ed and Outreach at NIU

- 1930-1972: Decentralization
- 1973-1987: Centralization
- 1987: Decentralization
- 1988-2002: Increased economic and community development
- 1992-2001: Three regional centers opened
- 2002: Reorganization for better engagement
Insights into Restructuring

• A vision of engagement can aide reorganization efforts

• NIU is building a model for integrating and streamlining disconnected outreach units.

• Reorganization can energize an outreach mission and focus.
Realities - Spring 2002

- Strong history of regionalism and commitment to outreach
- Strong Presidential support for engagement
- Mergers and acquisitions = 12 disconnected units mainly focused on off-campus activities
- Mixed performance and reputations
Realities (Continued)

- No centralized planning or marketing
- Significant duplication of effort
- Ineffective internal communications
- Little commitment to engagement
Strategic Questions

• What is unique about our situation?
• At what, exactly, can we be the best?
• How do we take outreach and engagement into the 21st century?
• What are the elements of our next success?
• If regional engagement is a survival strategy, how do we integrate it across the university?
This reorganization was NOT about:

Downsizing

Budget Cuts
This reorganization WAS about:

Survival strategies for a regional university in a unique environment
Our goal: turn the pyramid upside down.
Phase 1 - Core of Strategic Planning

- **Time:** 10 weeks – May 1st to July 15th
- **Staff:** 10 key members both internal and external to NIU Outreach
- **Outcomes:**
  - vision
  - mission
  - goals
  - strategic priorities
- **Communications:**
  - regular updates from VP to all staff
Results

- Produced core planning documents
- Launched division-wide planning
- Generated internal and external skepticism
Phase II - Core of Strategic Planning

- **Time:** 10 weeks – Aug 1st to Oct 15th
- **Staff:** 3 teams of 12 staff each – Programs and Services, Shared Services, Outreach Centers
- **Outcomes:**
  - Analysis of operations
  - Recommendations for organizational design
- **Communications:**
  - Sub team meetings
  - Unit meetings
  - Email updates
  - All staff meeting
“Moving Towards” University Outreach

Ongoing Strategic Planning

Phase II - Planning

⇒ UO Goal Setting
⇒ Service Areas Goal Setting
⇒ Defining Org. Structure
⇒ Staffing Requirements
⇒ Implementation Planning

Ongoing Communications
Results
New Organizational Structure

VP

AVP

Programs & Services
- Education and Training
- Research and Technical Assistance

Outreach Services
- Customer and Partnership Relations Support
- Human Resources
- Operations:
  - Business & Finance Services
  - Credit & Non Credit Services
  - IT Support

University Business Development
- eLearning Services

Outreach Centers
- Hoffman Estates
- Naperville
- Rockford
Phase III - Initial Implementation

- **Time:** 10 weeks - Oct 15\textsuperscript{th} to Dec 31\textsuperscript{th}
- **Staff:** AVP, Management Team, new working groups
- **Outcomes:**
  - reassignment and relocation of personnel
  - realignment of functions
  - in-depth study of operations
- **Communications:**
  - regular emails from AVP
  - unit meetings
“Moving Towards” University Outreach

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Ongoing Strategic Planning

Phase II - Planning
⇒ UO Goal Setting
⇒ Service Areas Goal Setting
⇒ Defining Org Structure
⇒ Staffing Requirements
⇒ Implementation Planning

Phase III - Implementation
⇒ Staffing
⇒ Change Management
⇒ Action Planning
⇒ Staff Development
⇒ Developing Performance Management Process

Ongoing Communications
Results

• New Management Team appointed
• Units consolidated and personnel relocated
• Individuals reassigned
• Functional teams launched at new unit levels
• Two new units launched
  ▪ Customer and Partnership Relations
  ▪ University Business Development
Functional Teams

Programs & Services

Shared Services

Outreach Centers

Ongoing “Virtual Teams” (Example: Business Management, Communications, etc.)

Strategic Teams (Example: Performance Management, Customer Satisfaction, etc.)

Ad Hoc Teams (Example: Office Location/Space etc.)
Phase IV - Implementation

- **Time:** Jan 1\textsuperscript{st} to Dec 31\textsuperscript{st} 2003
- **Staff:** Management Team, unit leaders, individuals

- **Outcomes:**
  - Business plans to meet strategic priorities
  - Unit and individual goals and objectives

- **Communications:**
  - VP and AVP
  - Management Team
  - Unit leaders
  - Inside Outreach newsletter
Strategic Priorities

• Culture of **Engagement**

• High level of customer and partner satisfaction

• Universal understanding of NIU outreach values and capabilities

• Strategic resource for NIU

• Strategic resource for the region
Additional Results

- Business plans aligned with vision, mission, priorities
- Performance Management Process
- Branding and identity standards
- New economic development and regional planning activities
Additional Results

• Two units added – IMEC and WESTEC
• Increased services to colleges
• CE Technologies market research
• Successful community college partnerships
Performance Management Process

- Emphasizes integration of *Engagement* into departmental, unit, and individual activities
- Performance Goals
- Development Goals
- Built on NIU Outreach Business Plan
  - Division, departments, units
- Leadership – 360’s
Branding and Identity


NIU Outreach Centers
Hoffman Estates • Naperville • Rockford

NIU Hoffman Estates
NIU Naperville
NIU Rockford

NIU Motorcycle Safety Project
NIU eLearning Services
NIU Center for Governmental Studies
NIU Lorado Taft Field Campus

5/13/2004
Transition Strategies

• Communications
• Personnel changes
• Business planning
• Culture building
• Leaders who Walk the Talk
• The Council
Continuing Challenges

• Leadership
• Centralization
• Relationship with NIU
• New acquisitions and mergers
• Funding
• Regional engagement
Next Steps for Regional Engagement

• Identify similarly situated universities for dialogue and collaboration
• Conduct research into burgeoning new types of suburban spaces
• Design engagement projects that will anticipate regional problems and create solutions.

Presence
- Building Identity
  - Assessing needs
  - Developing partnerships
  - Achieving common goals
  - Sustaining relationships

Knowledge
- Transforming Data into Knowledge
  - Gathering
  - Analyzing
  - Interpreting
  - Creating

Delivery
- Closing Gaps
  - Educating
  - Facilitating
  - Modeling
  - Brokering

As the best regional university in Illinois, NIU engages the people of this region to create a better future by educating students of all ages, actively participating in economic, social, and cultural development; and facilitating innovation.
Things we learned.....

• Realignment is not the same as reorganization.
• Inclusive processes improve results and acceptance.
• Performance management is the key to long-term change.
• Transition management can make or break reorganization.
• Reality checks can be a springboard to greater vision.
• We can invent our future.
www.outreach.niu.edu/outreach