

Strategic Plan - Goal 3: Enhance Community Engagement
Executive Summary of the Audit Review
March 18, 2011

A review was conducted of the three initiatives making up goal 3 by interviewing the Implementation Chair and the Initiative Chairs along with a review of the initiative work plans and materials provided by the Initiative Chairs.

Overall, the implementation of goal 3 is moving forward in an effective manner. All three implementation chairs are actively engaged in the work of the goal; enhancing community engagement. As one would expect, the various action items of each initiative have various levels of current success, but the team is making good progress with all three initiatives and is on track to fulfilling the goals and benchmarks. Clearly, ISU has not yet achieved the level of engagement we aspire to, but we are making effective progress.

Last year's audit team expressed some concern that the goal's objectives and initiatives don't really match very well. I concur with that concern. However, it is clear that progress is being made on the goal's objectives as well as on the specific action items listed under each initiative. It is clear in talking with the implementation chairs and reviewing the materials they provided that good progress is being made on 4 of the 5 goal objectives. Progress on the other objective, "increase the amount of direct and indirect financial support provided by the University to community, social, cultural, and economic development groups" is less clear. The necessary information to "audit" this particular objective was not available for review.

Initiative 1 is to create a coordinated community engagement program. The units making up ISU's community engagement efforts have moved toward consolidation under the Associate VP for Community Engagement and Experiential Learning. Major efforts in this initiative are being conducted by the Business Engagement Center, the Rural Health Innovation Collaborative and Continuing Education. The effort to connect ISU students and faculty to the work at the Riverfront and with Riverscape is making real progress with faculty and students from several academic disciplines.

Action items dealing with encouraging and supporting individual involvement in community engagement efforts are also moving forward effectively, including efforts for staff and alumni. The staff program has attracted a great deal of interest among ISU staff members.

An important part of this initiative involves student engagement and the first inventory of courses having a curricular engagement component has been completed. The implementation of the inventory survey revealed the need to refine the classifications of "engagement" in order to better define the kinds of engagement activity that is occurring in ISU courses and a follow-up inventory with better defined categories of engagement should be produced in the coming academic year. A measure of students who complete courses that contain a significant community engagement component is needed as well as a measure of the percentage of courses in ISU's offerings that contain such a component.

Finally, the service-learning scholars program is moving forward. A team headed by the Center for Community Engagement faculty fellow visited several institutions in Salt Lake City that have mature service-learning scholars programs and that team should be issuing a report of best-practices at these successful programs soon.

Initiative 2 is to increase the distance education offerings to better meet the needs of ISU students and the needs of local employers in order to support local economic development. The hiring of a Dean of Extended Learning has advanced the work of this initiative significantly. The creation and implementation of a survey of distance education students and faculty will provide the information necessary to advance this initiative. The degree completion program is now online and the Dean is busy improving student services for distance students to help them navigate the system. A task force on distance education is at work to establish guidelines and standards. Distance education is expanding in two major areas, degree completion and professional programs. Another important aspect of this work is the College Challenge program, which after some rethinking and reconfiguration is moving forward and enrolling more high school teachers and students.

Initiative 3 involves expanding ISU's visibility in the Indianapolis area. Efforts in this initiative are also moving forward. The MBA program will be enrolling students for the first time in the greater Indianapolis area (Hendricks County) this fall. The list of campus-coordinated events held in the greater Indianapolis area is expanding. Indianapolis area media coverage of ISU events, is also expanding and ISU is getting more "good" press in Indianapolis area media outlets. The first community service project has occurred in Indianapolis and ISU has begun to sponsor important events like the Economics Club luncheon to raise awareness of ISU programs and projects.

Overall, efforts to enhance community engagement are moving forward. The proportion of ISU faculty, staff, and students who engage in significant community engagement projects is increasing in line with goals and seems to be moving forward in a way that will allow on schedule attainment of the goal's benchmarks.