

Audit of Goal Three – *Enhancing Community Engagement* **Executive Summary**

Overview

The goal statement “*Foster the engagement of students, faculty, and staff in the life of our communities and in pursuits of improving their economic and social well-being*” struck us as somewhat misleading, especially use of the words “our” and “their”. From analysis of the initiatives, the emphasis appears to be on *communities’* economic and social well-being. Can communities mean something other than a location? We suggest a clarification of the goal statement, and also consideration of including the benefits of these engagement activities to the students, faculty, and staff.

With recent updates to this team’s planning documents, there has been a movement from concepts to a work plan. There is good progress in some initiatives. Additional detail should be added to the initiatives in order to support progress against the benchmarks.

The objectives of the three initiatives seem clear enough, but do the initiatives match up to the goal statement? In some cases actions planned within these initiatives for future years help address the goals. Progress against the Goal Three benchmarks has been made with development of plans. We expect the numbers in measurable benchmarks to increase in future years as the plans move into programs.

Initiative 1: Coordination of Community Engagement Programs

We suggest being more explicit about *how* coordination of the community engagement programs will be accomplished. More details can provide measurable status markers and specific tasks for summer 2010. Help distinguish the benefits of community engagement activities to ISU participants and community partners, as well as to non-degree seeking students. Based on comments from some faculty, expand the definitions of community engagement activities referenced in surveys.

Help academic units learn how to integrate community engagement into courses and unit activities. Expand the scope of how community engagement accomplishments are promoted. For example, establish an annual forum, a campus-based community engagement journal, comprehensive web site, and so forth. Expand the mini-grant program to support development of community engagement. Expand the role of a *CE referral center* that would pass along leads for community engagement opportunities; encourage ISU representatives to pass along community engagement leads they encounter within our community.

Expand the concept of the Learning Scholars program. Clarify the academic transcript component in this program. Consider adding a scholarship to this program to attract quality students to participate in the program; from experience, the scholarship renewal can help create a sense of responsibility to work hard to fulfill an obligation to the program. We suggest moving up the time line and establishing a pilot cohort recruited in 2010-2011 – help evaluate the concept and build appropriate detail. Plan to take this program to the next level where they *serve campus stakeholders* as well as off-campus organizations. Consider establishing a *student volunteer bureau* on campus to market community engagement resources to outside agencies, gathering leads, and matching students’ skills with opportunities.

The Class Legacy Project has significant detail and appears to be in fine shape this year. Will it be expanded to alumni classes? The final action of this initiative, Support Early Career/Professional Experience, is a wonderful idea. There is significant work in the College of Business Networks Professional Development Program and in its Center for Student Professional Development as well as the ISU Career Center. How can this experience be used to move this action forward? How is the budget used?

Initiative 2: Expand Distance Education Offerings to Meet the Needs of Students and to Support Economic Development

We particularly appreciate the contextual narrative at the beginning of this narrative, and suggest the team add similar setting statements to Initiatives 1 and 3. It is good to have the Adult Degree Completion program nearing approval on our campus. While this is a solution for those who are unable to complete their original degree programs, we should also develop a program to work with each college to locate inactive students within their disciplines who have not completed degrees and provide ways (distance or campus-based courses) to complete their original degrees.

We are looking forward to the *White Paper* report about online college credit. Will this investigation explore the ISU College Challenge program for high school students? We applaud the team's concept of providing continuing professional education via distance for graduates of designated programs.

It is crucial to address the need for distance-based foundational studies courses, with some detail about how to proceed. This is a current problem and could be addressed during summer 2010. A detailed work plan is needed for this action. Providing more assistance to faculty who wish to transform their courses and programs to distance delivery is vital. Emphasize the instructional design *partnership* with CIRT in Office of Information Technology. This includes attention to assessment of distance learning as pointed out in the report.

Working closely with units to encourage development of distance delivery proposals is important. This is an opportunity for the dean of extended education to work with the colleges and continuing education in order to survey needs. Additional detail in this action should begin to take shape as the new dean begins at ISU.

Initiative 3: Enhance the Visibility of ISU in Indianapolis

Significant progress has been made on this initiative as indicated by detailed documents accompanying the initiative report, particularly in the first action of this initiative. The report recognizes the strategic position of the Indianapolis area and focuses on that city. We suggest that the team consider using "Central Indiana" in some statements to broaden the scope of the initiative. For instance, the MBA program of the Scott College of Business will probably be located in Hendricks County west of Indianapolis.

Are there other key areas of the state in which similar planning models could be applied? We are recruiting more intensively in northwest Indiana and Chicago. How do we address the continuing decline of our southwest Indiana recruiting base? Are there underserved areas in which we could offer joint programming with a host institution of higher education?

One action scheduled for year 2 is to expand other academic programs to Indianapolis. There were few details to be found beyond the conceptual statement, but it seems logical to develop some parameters and perhaps use summer 2010 to encourage developmental work with those programs.

We also suggest that efforts to assess the ISU image held by our alumni could be fruitful. In some cases, we have lost touch with alumni and efforts to promote ISU could incorporate this important stakeholder group.

Finding appropriate student and faculty success stories to share with our stakeholders is critical to establishing a successful image. We recommend that programs be put in place to work closely with campus units to learn their stories. Clearly this fits with the first initiative's action bullets to coordinate community engagement. Our campus may not tout its own accomplishments so encouragement and new lines of communications will help.