

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE REPORT

9/28/15

Introduction

In his September 18, 2014, State of the University Address, President Larry Dietz called for the establishment of a Center for Civic Engagement to further strengthen Illinois State University's commitment to the value and importance of civic engagement. A Task Force, comprised of representatives from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs (Appendix 1), was formed in January 2015.

The charge to the Task Force was:

1. Research best practices and models for civic engagement at universities.
2. Evaluate the best practices and models.
3. Recommend strategic approaches for supporting, enhancing, and connecting current endeavors.
4. Explore potential funding to support new practices and/or models.
5. Develop recommendations on what practices and/or models would best meet the needs of Illinois State University for the future, given the current successful efforts already in place.
6. Prepare and present a final report in summer 2015.

Timeline and Tasks

The Task Force met from early February 2015 through June 2015. The Task Force:

- Conducted campus and community subject matter experts (SME) interviews with 47 campus and community people (Appendix 2)
- Benchmarked 13 colleges and universities (Appendix 3)
- Reviewed literature on organizational models and concepts
- Researched funding sources
- Evaluated data, created recommendations, and wrote report

The Task Force's recommendations are reflective of the cumulative research from benchmarking, SME interviews, literature review, and discussions about the ideal organizational structure for Illinois State University. The Task Force sought to garner widespread support and department backing where essential.

To that end, the Task Force proposes guiding principles, recommendations, and critical components for further consideration in establishing a Center for Civic Engagement.

Guiding Principles

While there are numerous civic engagement efforts occurring across the University, the campus will benefit from a more systematic, coordinated approach. The intent of creating a Center for Civic Engagement is to bring clarity of vision and shared purpose to the University's efforts. The scope for a Center for Civic Engagement should be broad and include in-class and out-of-class learning and experiences that partner with the local community as well as the global community. The Center is not intended to be the sole provider of campus civic engagement programs but rather leverage current programs and be a catalyst to create, coordinate and expand future programming.

Recommendations

1. A center for civic engagement should be created at ISU with its purpose being to develop in the members of the campus community, primarily students, an appreciation, understanding, and application of the principles of civic engagement as defined by Illinois State University.
2. The center should have dual reporting lines to the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.
3. The Center should be primarily funded from General Revenue and/or Agency dollars to ensure consistent and sustained effort. Enhancements to the basic programs and initiatives of the Center could come from grants and gifts.
4. As soon as possible a steering/transitional committee or an interim staff should be appointed to address fundamental planning and logistical issues that will need to be accomplished prior to a center becoming operational. Availability of resources may accelerate or impede implementation. (Action taken: Dr. Jan Paterson was appointed Interim Director 8/1/15)

Critical Components

The Center, in consultation with the campus, should develop and maintain the campus' definition of civic engagement in order to provide a consistent standard for Illinois State. The Center should serve as the central repository and clearinghouse for the campus regarding civic engagement data and activities, acquire and distribute grants and grant information related to civic engagement, provide administrative support for the campus' American Democracy Project and Civic Engagement and Responsibility minor, create additional civic engagement programs and initiatives and assist in marketing existing ones, and convene gatherings of campus and community partners to increase communication and coordination.

Conclusion

The Task Force would like to thank the many members of the campus and local community who graciously and generously contributed their time and expertise to educating and informing the work of the Task Force. During the course of the Subject Matter Expert interviews the potential for future partnerships and collaborations became even more evident. There are undoubtedly opportunities for sharing resources, reducing duplication, and gaining efficiencies. The enthusiasm expressed by the SMEs for the creation of a Center demonstrates the readiness for and timeliness of this next step in civic engagement work.

Appendix 1

Task Force Members

- Jan Paterson (chair) - College of Education
- Angela Davenport - Dean of Students Office
- Brenda Huber - College of Arts and Sciences
- Chad Kahl - Milner Library
- Mike Minton - Career Center
- Amelia Noel-Elkins - University College
- Dawn Sanner - Campus Recreation and Student Fitness Center

Appendix 2

Campus and Community Subject Matter Expert interviews

- Frank Beck (Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development)
- Bob Bradley (Department Politics and Government)
- Luis Canales (International Studies)
- Tim Fredstrom (Honors Program)
- Steve Hunt and Cheri Simonds (School of Communication)
- Jim Jawahar (author of ISU's Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement First-Time Classification application)
- Claire LaMonica (Center for Teaching Learning and Technology)
- Robert Lee (Chicago Pipeline Project)
- Alan Lessoff (Urban Studies minor)
- Lance Lippert (Civic Engagement and Responsibility Minor)
- Missy Nergard (Office of Sustainability)
- Carl Palmer (Political Engagement Project)
- Noha Shawki and Art Munin (Co-chairs of ISU's American Democracy Project)
- Harriett Steinbach (Leadership and Community Connections)
- Annie Weaver (Leadership and Community Connections)
- Janet Wilson (School of Theater)
- Leanna Bordner and Paul Downey (Athletics)
- 19 student leaders representing various governance/umbrella student organizations (Student Government, Residence Hall Government, Greek life councils, athletes, future alumni council, campus programming board)
- Ecumenical Campus Ministers (Susan Ryder)
- Heartland Community College (Sarah Hunt)
- Home Sweet Home Ministries (Matt Dratt)
- Illinois Wesleyan University (Deborah Halperin)
- PATH (Karen Zangerle)
- Red Cross (Leanna Bordner)
- United Way of McLean County (David Taylor)
- Western Avenue Community Center (Lisa Barton)

Appendix 3

Benchmarked institutions

Most of these schools had a number of common attributes in their civic engagement efforts but several had unique approaches or organizational structures, all of which helped inform the Task Force in its deliberations about aspirational models or practices for Illinois State University. Of the entire list, only Weber State University was identified as an aspirational institutional and organizational model.

- IUPUI
- Kennesaw State University
- University of North Carolina - Greensboro
- Eastern Connecticut State University
- Towson University
- University of Central Florida
- University of Central Oklahoma
- University of West Florida
- Weber State University
- Winthrop University
- California State University, Monterey Bay
- Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
- Sam Houston State University