Excellence in Community Engagement Visioning & Planning Advisory Committee

July 2011 Committee Retreat: Summary Report

Prepared by

Emily Janke

Nancy Hunter

Patti Clayton

With assistance from Kristin Buchner

Summary Report & Extended Report available at
http://communityengagement.uncg.edu

*"**Engagement** is less an initiative than an orientation towards the future – a many-sided conversation that our fellow citizens are keen to have with us and which **needs our best thinking**"*

Engagement as a Core Value for the University: A Consultation Document. Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p.319.

"Promot(ing) an inclusive culture of engaged scholarship, civic responsibility, and community service (engaged scholarship)" is a core goal identified in the UNCG 2009-2014 Strategic Plan (4.3). Continuing to build on its existing commitment to excellence in community engagement, UNCG has established a Community Engagement Initiative (CEI) in the Office of Research and Economic Development to elevate and operationalize at the institutional level previous work already begun by earlier groups of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community colleagues. The Initiative has implemented a comprehensive and inclusive visioning and planning process to support excellence in community engagement. Although there is a wide array of areas to be included and addressed in such visioning and planning, the CEI is focused especially on exploring possibilities for university-wide communication systems and infrastructure to enhance the resources, programs, processes, and support needed to sustain reciprocal engagement between UNCG and the broader community for mutual benefit. The CEI contributes to existing efforts in offices and departments campus-wide to incorporate community engagement into faculty scholarship and student learning and development.

Community engagement is defined and described in this process as follows:

> *Community engagement* (sometimes also referred to as *civic engagement*) is the "collaboration (among) institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."[1]
>
> "**Reciprocity**" is the recognition, respect, and valuing of the knowledge, perspective, and resources that each partner contributes to the collaboration.[1]
>
> Through community engagement, community and university knowledge and resources are brought together to "enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good."[2] The "community" in community engagement is not defined by sector, such as private or public, for-profit or nonprofit; rather, community is broadly defined to include individuals, groups, and organizations external to campus that use collaborative processes for the purpose of contributing to the public good.[3]
>
> Excerpted from Community Engagement: Terms and Definitions for Promotion and Tenure Guidelines, 2011

In January 2011 the *Excellence in Community Engagement Visioning and Planning Advisory Committee (ECEVPAC)* was established to serve as a learning community that brings a deeply informed and critical perspective to this undertaking. Committee members were selected based on their experience with and commitment to supporting community-university partnerships and collaborations. The work of ECEVPAC consists of regular gatherings in the spring and fall 2011 semesters and a day-long retreat on July 20, 2011, at the office facilities of the Welfare Reform Liaison Project. Participants engaged in facilitated dialogue around the values, goals, strategies, and work priorities of UNCG's Community Engagement initiative. **This report provides a brief summary and analysis of the ideas that emerged during the ECEVPAC retreat**. A longer and more detailed report is available on the Community Engagement Initiative's webpage.

---

[1] Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (2011). Classification Description: Community Engagement Elective Classification. Retrieved February 17, 2011 from http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community_engagement.php?key=1213.

[2] Office for Public Engagement at University of Minnesota. (2011). What is public engagement? Retrieved February 17, 2011 from http://www.engagement.umn.edu/WhatsPublicEngagement.html.

[3] Driscoll, A., & Sandmann, L. (2011). *Evaluation Criteria for the Scholarship of Engagement.* Retrieved February 15, 2011 from http://www.scholarshipofengagement.org/evaluation/evaluation_criteria.html.

http://www.communityengagement.uncg.edu

E-CEVPAC MEMBERS

* = not present at the retreat

Brittany Atkinson	Economics	graduate student
Chelsea Boccardo	Recreation and Parks Management	undergraduate
Kristin Buchner	Public Affairs	graduate student
Cherry Callahan*	Student Affairs	administrator
Patti Clayton	PHC Ventures, IUPUI, UNCG	visiting scholar
Kathleen Edwards	Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations	doctoral student
Brenda Elliot*	Guilford County Schools	community member
Colleen Fairbanks*	Teacher Education and Higher Education	faculty
Susan Feit	National Conference for Community and Justice	community member
Cathy Hamilton	Office of Leadership and Service-Learning	administrator
Helen Hebert	University Relations	administrator
Celia Hooper*	Health and Human Sciences	administrator
Julia Jackson-Newsom	University Research Projects, ORED	administrator
Emily Janke (chair)	Special Assistant for Community Engagement, ORED	administrator
Spoma Jovanovic	Communication Studies	faculty
Laurie Kennedy-Malone	Adult/Gerontological Nurse Practitioner Program	faculty
Ed Kitchen*	Joseph M. Bryan Foundation	community member
Bonnie Landaverdy*	Economics	undergraduate
Patrick Lee Lucas*	Interior Architecture	faculty
Jerry McGuire	Economic Development, ORED	administrator
Donna Newton	Guilford Nonprofit Consortium	community member
Chris Payne	Center for Youth, Family, & Community Partnerships	administrator
Diane Picciuto	Corporate and Foundation Relations	administrator
Nell Pynes	International Programs	administrator
Hollie Rose-Galli*	Volunteer Center of Greensboro	community member
Cathryne Schmitz	Conflict and Peace Studies; Social Work	faculty
Jim Settle*	Student Affairs	administrator
Terri Shelton	Office of Research and Economic Development	administrator
Stephen Sills*	Sociology	faculty
Jim Summey	High Point Community Against Violence	community member
Sheron Sumner*	Greensboro Urban Ministry	community member
Anthony Wade	City of Greensboro	community member
Dianne Welsh	Entrepreneurship	faculty
Bob Wineburg	Social Work	faculty

Retreat facilitators:

Nancy Parks Hunter	NPH Consulting	guest facilitator
Patti Clayton	PHC Ventures, IUPUI, UNCG	visiting scholar

EXAMINING UNCG'S CORE VALUES AS ACTIVATED THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

QUESTION: What does each UNCG value look like as operationalized in community engagement, with an emphasis on reciprocity?

COLLABORATION

UNCG Value: Interdisciplinary, intercommunity, inter-institutional, and international collaboration is reflected and rewarded in teaching, research, creative activity, community engagement, and infrastructure.

Refined through the lens of reciprocity:

The university seeks out, cultivates, and rewards not only individual achievement but also the sharing of knowledge, ideas, responsibility, power, and opportunities between and among persons, programs, disciplines, communities, institutions, professions, and nations—toward the ends of greater understanding of one another; enhanced processes and outcomes of teaching, research and creative activity, and service; effective and efficient infrastructure; complementary systems that minimize unnecessary duplication; and a culture that embraces the many manifestations of reciprocity .

INCLUSIVENESS

UNCG Value: A welcoming and inclusive academic community, based on open dialogue and shared governance, offers a culture of caring with visible, meaningful representation of difference.

Refined through the lens of reciprocity:

We aspire to be an inviting, caring, and diverse community of learners who appreciate, seek out, and welcome individual uniqueness in all its forms; as such we insist on mutual respect, open dialogue, and shared governance, and we are committed to cultivating and building upon our own and one another's strengths.

RESPONSIBILITY

UNCG Value: A public institution, the University responds to community needs and serves the public in systematic fashion through the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

Refined through the lens of reciprocity:

The university is one of many organizations in the community partnering in the sharing of knowledge, resources, and assets to address current and future challenges through informed developmental processes and relationships, and as such all members of the university community have an obligation to listen, learn, and contribute respectfully.

SUSTAINABILITY

UNCG Value: Academics, operations, and outreach are conducted with careful attention to the enduring interconnectedness of social equity, the environment, the economy, and aesthetics.

Refined through the lens of reciprocity:

Sustainability is stewardship, and as a steward of place we attend carefully to the interconnectedness of social equity, environment, economy, and aesthetics in all aspects of the life of the university through nurturing reciprocal relationships and continually anticipating and adapting to changing dynamics and conditions.

TRANSPARENCY

UNCG Value: Open decision-making, clear goals, and measurable outcomes enhance performance, trust, and accountability.

Refined through the lens of reciprocity:

Recognizing its interdependence with others and operating in a collaborative rather than competitive spirit, the university—internally and in our relationships with external individuals, organizations, and communities—shares information and resources, makes decisions openly, establishes and clearly communicates mutually-beneficial goals, documents and disseminates activities in readily accessible ways, holds itself accountable for high quality processes and outcomes, and cultivates practices based on trust and respect.

EXAMINING A "NORTH STAR" & CORE STRATEGY FOR THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Background: The metaphor of the "North Star" can be a useful way to examine ultimate purpose. A North Star embodies a sense of meaning, provides focus and direction, helps establish and frame priorities, and catalyzes collaboration.

QUESTION: What is the North Star of the Community Engagement Initiative and what is the core strategy it enacts to achieve it?

Draft presented at retreat for discussion:

North Star*:* Enhanced capacities of the greater Piedmont Triad community—of which the university is a member—to understand issues of public concern, mobilize resources to address them, and create a shared sense of future possibilities.

Core Strategy: Identify, activate, and support reciprocal partnerships that engage UNCG with individuals, groups, and organizations in the broader community. Develop a (one or more) topical focus on a current and significant public issue facing the Greensboro community that (1) builds upon existing assets and interests within the community and the university; (2) requires trans-disciplinary and trans-sector collaboration to address its complexities effectively; (3) facilitates collaborative community-university generation and dissemination of new knowledge and promising practices; (4) promotes long-term, multifaceted partnerships, and (5) allows for achievable and measurable short- and long-term goals and outcomes.

Synthesis of discussion:

Like about North Star and Core Strategy	Would change about North Star and Core Strategy
Positions UNCG as a part of (not apart from) community	Shorten
Focuses on partnerships / jointly setting priorities and strategies	More passion/vision/aspirational language
Builds on assets / Focuses on strengths	Topical / issue focus – narrowing, inhibits examining the systems that frame the issues, marginalizing
Engages the community to define the engagement	More action / solution orientation
"Shared sense of future possibilities" – goes beyond working within current structures	More explicit connections to what already exists
Topical focus, as long as it isn't too narrow	Broaden to "Greensboro area" / Triad / beyond
Focuses on Greensboro	Make more specific to UNCG – very general as written and could refer to any university or any community
Trans-disciplinary, trans-sector	"Issue" – can have negative connotation; also not just current issue - current and forward thinking
"Mobilizing" not just talking	Reactive quality to some of the language

Opportunities North Star and Core Strategy Present	Challenges North Star and Core Strategy Present
Synergy of leveraging multiple initiatives and partnerships (including current and new) Let us tell a new story (grounded in an old one) Focus on assets first then identify topics Foster dialogue around standards for "significant," for topical focus, etc. Blur lines/borders between community and university, between stakeholders Connections to integrated marketing campaign will be key Stimulus to identify current efforts in the community and the university, to better define strengths	North Star needs to be broader (community more generally) but Strategy needs to be narrower; on the other hand, is this a "North Galaxy"? Determining win-win priorities Perception and reality of limited resources work Slipping between issue focus (poverty) and population focus (refugees), especially if use problem-oriented language (refugees are not a problem or issue) Might limit exploration of opportunities May be seen as just more talk / just another fad; Strategic Plan may change and no longer support this Ensuring the participation of all stakeholders (including students) in the process, so that no one is only on the receiving end of it

Questions North Star and Core Strategy raise

Is it too limiting, insufficiently organic? If (as the community members at the retreat noted) when we "look upriver to where issues in our community start it isn't limiting," how can we best take that "upriver" perspective?

What is UNCG's unique and specific role?

Do we need to define how this benefits UNCG?

How to create shared sense of future possibilities through the core strategies when the emphasis is on measurable outcomes? On the other hand, is there sufficient outcomes orientation here?

How do we do the internal work we need to do in order to be able to undertake this (e.g., becoming more transparent internally)?

How best to invite participation by all stakeholders (beyond open door)? For example, participation of students: How best to invite them? How connect to both curricular and co-curricular? In what ways do current structures support students in doing this (e.g., developing long-term, multi-faceted partnerships)?

How to do this in a way that transforms systems, structures, paradigms and doesn't reinforce the status quo?

How can we use this to move from a community of decline to one of stability to one that is thriving?

Do we need to learn more about how other universities in the area are involved in Greensboro? What effects might other programs in the area have on this initiative?

What is the relationship assumed or envisioned here between community engagement and economic development?

How does the CEI best embrace the different trajectories different people will follow toward the North Star?

How will this fit into faculty and students' existing roles and activities? How is it incorporated into the curricula?

QUESTION: What responsibilities, competencies, and challenges are associated with the distinct functions of concierge (referral agent), project coordinator, and partnership catalyst?

	Concierge *Support those who have questions but don't know where to go* Routes questions; answers phone or e-mail inquiries and helps to direct individuals, groups, or organizations to the persons, systems, and resources available	**Coordinator** *Support those who would like to identify a partner but need help developing this* Introduces individuals, convenes meetings of groups or organizations that may have similar interests or complementary/synergistic resources, shares and connects to existing resources related to best practices of reciprocal partnerships to inform the establishment of relationships	**Catalyst** *Support for those who would like to engage in a partnership but require additional assistance in the day-to-day activities* Assists with the day-to-day aspects of managing the activities of a partnership, uses best practices of reciprocal partnerships to inform the maintenance of relationships
Responsibilities	- Listen - Be responsive - Follow through	- Create lists of who is involved in which projects - Facilitator, process coordinator, event manager - Gathering and distributing resources for projects; developing information handbooks; maintaining timelines for projects - Working to ensure sustainability of projects	- Relationship building - Follow-up to ensure matches work successfully - Continually improve the process, share how it is working - Always respond back in person - Play an *active* role – makes things happen
Competencies	- Politeness - Cultural competence (including shared language) - Being able to ask probing questions in a non-threatening way - Search skills - Inclusiveness	- Know how to leverage - Knowledge of prior projects and their sustainability - Data-base manager - Team player, creative problem solver, resourceful, organized - Systemic process, system wide perspective - Recognize opportunities - Know skill sets of key players - Good communicator	- Comprehensive knowledge base within campus and beyond, how campus and community work, stay current - Know the right questions to ask - Creative – see potential - "Servant" mindset - Strengths-based approach – not just able to identify gaps/needs – asset mapping - Able to deal with past misunderstandings and move ahead
Challenges	- Needs to be a long-term role - Position needs to be defined as including a level of sophistication - Need a comprehensive picture - The political climate	- Politics - Sustainability - Public relations - Lack of historical systems - Needs to be invited to and expected at the right tables	- Recognize the importance of the *individual* but create change in *culture* so that the institutional structure sustains reciprocal partnerships - Present conceptions often based on past experience, but we need to hope for different outcomes

http://www.communityengagement.uncg.edu

APPLYING OUR THINKING ABOUT VALUES, NORTH STAR, & STRATEGY TO EMERGING INITIATIVE PRIORITIES – CAPACITY BUILDING

QUESTION: What specific capacities should be developed within each stakeholder group in community engagement?

Community members	Students	Faculty	Administrators
Understanding the spectrum of collaboration (possible, desirable, feasible) Understanding how to collaborate, including with one another Equitable treatment (e.g., across students) Being transparent with expectations More awareness of UNCG, including what we can offer How to stay on mission while partnering Understanding student culture Understanding faculty work Valuing students' contributions and perspectives Enthusiasm Being able to structure processes of working together (e.g., with students)	Understanding community engagement, philanthropy Global citizenship Understanding why we do what we do, mission (including understanding faculty work)	Ability to honestly assess what community members are being asked to give and what they are receiving Sensitivity to varying student backgrounds Ability to provide guidance without dictating to others Being able to communicate in ways that work for everyone (vs. in academic jargon) Being able to make connections between theoretical perspectives (and how to study something) and the practice of communities (and how to engage with others around questions) Humbleness Commitment to and skill in listening Ability to highlight this work as scholarship Being able and willing to continue learning Ability to get funding to support this work Understanding what is and is not helpful (to community)	Willingness to examine and change policies and structures (e.g., in support of experiential education) Knowledge of best practices in community engagement Passion for / commitment to the university's public mission Being able to send clear messages to all stakeholders and to keep them coming to the table Ability to get funding to support this work Boundary crossing capacities Intercultural competence Ability to align (mission, values, structures, practices, etc.)

QUESTION: What design principles are important to consider in developing capacity building opportunities with each group ?

Community members	Students	Faculty	Administrators
Needs to include concrete ideas, tools, etc. that can be put to immediate use Use technology (including phone with small groups) Integrate into existing gatherings or other activities Repetition of opportunities; multiple locations Be clear and concise Provide tangible examples of partnerships and discuss how to replicate Individual meetings to explore possibilities for tailored collaboration	Provide peer support Be clear about desired outcomes	Connect early on with faculty who come to UNCG with an interest in community engagement Focus on relationships and understanding within the departments Build space for people doing this work to come together Mentoring by tenured faculty	Include representatives of all stakeholder groups – ensure that this work is understood in terms of mutual accountability and transparency Networked resource sharing Each administrator needs to feel that he/she is contributing something of value Need to understand ourselves first – "Leadership UNCG" type opportunities Gatherings (like this retreat) that provide time and permission to focus on this topic

QUESTION: What are the primary challenges associated with capacity building with each stakeholder group?

Community members	Students	Faculty	Administrators
Time Bringing the right people together (those who will be good partners) Need to see the benefit of professional development in order to make the trade-offs of time		Community engagement and capacity building for it not being viewed as part of workload Time to build relationships, be in communities	Time Lack of flexibility due to other responsibilities; community engagement not being integrated with their other work

QUESTION: What are the primary contributions each stakeholder can make to capacity building processes?

Community members	Students	Faculty	Administrators
Vouch for UNCG peer to peer Share experiences to help inspire others Talk with faculty in the community		How to break through barriers to this work Mentoring younger faculty Helping administrators to understand the importance of providing recognition	Provide recognition

Throughout the day in the various modes of discussion, several themes emerged repeatedly from this dialogue that will be important to keep in mind as this community engagement work moves forward. Themes most often recurring were:

➢ the dual face of challenges and opportunities within the current time of change in the university and community
➢ the need for true collaboration and relationship nurturing (which take time and occur along continua of possibilities, need to be beneficial to all)
➢ the importance of identifying and utilizing existing assets (both within and beyond the university, noting that assets exist but may not be recognized
➢ the challenge of measuring community engagement outcomes (including the need to measure results to show value)
➢ the need for a cultural shift within the university to support community engagement
➢ the need for a servant leadership culture in community engagement work
➢ the importance of developing and controlling the community engagement narrative (including increasing awareness of what is already happening, getting information out, increasing recognition for this work)
➢ the need to balance pure scholarship with community engagement
➢ the challenges of sharing power (within the university, beyond the university, between the university and the community)
➢ promoting transparency
➢ building a strong system of support (including both the people involved and the structures)
➢ sharing assets (as both necessary for successful collaboration and a benefit of such collaboration)
➢ the importance of sustainability (including financial and other resource commitments)

> **"These are rough times for community work. Where the roads were once clear they are now icy, with black ice that we cannot see, so we need to be careful as we work together in this icy context."**
>
> *~ Odell Cleveland,*
> *Welfare Reform Liaison Project*

Examples of questions for further discussion:

➢ How do we best navigate the real and perceived limitations and position this work to thrive given financial and cultural hindrances?
➢ How do we approach and frame this work as distinctive to our context?
➢ How do we do the internal work we need to do in order to be able to undertake community engagement successfully?
➢ How best to invite participation by all stakeholders?
➢ How to do this in a way that transforms systems, structures, paradigms and doesn't reinforce the status quo?
➢ How can we use this opportunity to move from a community of decline to one of stability to one that is thriving?

http://www.communityengagement.uncg.edu