The following is an excerpt of Barbara Holland’s PowerPoint presentation given at the 2004 CSU Colloquium. Dr. Holland presented a series of slides during her discussion and interspersed these with a number of activities. We encourage you to use these slides and activities in any way that you find useful. You may want to use the questions as a vehicle for developing and deepening partnerships between universities (and, in some cases, faculty members) and community partners. For example, you might give each stakeholder a few minutes to reflect on the question and ask them to write about their responses; you could then facilitate a discussion based upon these responses. You may mix up the structure and ask for people to share in pairs, trios, and so forth.

Understanding and Strengthening the Community Role in Service-Learning Partnerships

Presented at the 2004 CSU Colloquium on Community Service Learning

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Why Community-University Partnerships?
Partnerships:
• Enhance quality of life in the region
• Increase relevance of programs & services
• Add public purposes to research agendas
• Attract new resources for campus & community
• Link campus and community in common purpose

Common Partnership Themes
• Education through the lifespan (technology, literacy, English language, etc.)
• School improvement
• Youth development
• Community planning and capacity
• Workforce quality
• Economic development
• Health

• Livability (environment, safety, culture, conflict resolution, etc.)

The Role of Higher Education in Society
• Universities are all resources for:
  – Economic benefit
  – Innovation and creativity through research
  – Social opportunity through student learning
• The Engaged University also addresses:
  – Community development
  – Social concerns and opportunities
  – Development of future citizens
  – Community capacity and quality of life

• UNIVERSITIES ARE COMMUNITY ASSETS

Activity 1
Community:
• What are the University’s goals for partnering with you? What do they really want?
University:
• What are the Community’s goals for partnering with you? What do they really want?

Activity 2
Community:
• What do you believe the University thinks you want from them? How do they see your interests/goals?
University:
• What do you believe the Community thinks you want from them? How do they see your interests/goals?

Activity 3
• What is your ONE greatest fear/concern regarding the future of your community-university partnership?
• What ONE thing do you most wish your partner organization would do differently?
Why do Academics Want to Partner with Community?

• Enhance student learning
• Increase local student enrollment
• Contribute to quality of life in the region
• Increase relevance of programs & services
• Add public purposes to research agendas
• Attract new resources for campus & community
• Link campus and community in common purpose
• Build public understanding and support

Why do Communities Partner with Universities?

• Motivate students to link education and community
• Tap into academic expertise; university as resource for progress
• Promote economic stability/growth
• Improve schools and youth outcomes
• Gain new perspectives on program services
• Build a responsive workforce
• Create new community networks

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement refers to the many ways an academic institution demonstrates through mutually beneficial partnerships the alignment between the teaching and research agenda of the university and the self-identified interests of the communities of its region. Service learning is one example of a civic engagement strategy.

Engaged Campus Characteristics

• Articulates engagement in mission and strategy
• Involves community in continuous, purposeful, and authentic ways
• Links learning to engagement
• Links engagement to every aspect of campus organization; accountability to community; listens!
• Develops and sustains necessary infrastructure for partnerships
• Demonstrates leadership at all levels of organization
• Supports interdisciplinary work; reflects community priorities
• Makes engagement visible internally and externally
• Assesses engagement within the context of faculty, students, and community

The Engaged Community Partner

• Articulates their specific goals for collaboration
• Values student/faculty involvement in the work of the organization
• Understands university’s goals and capacity
• Prepares staff and clients for interactions with campus
• Provides necessary supervision/support for students
• Communicates limitations/expectations clearly
• Participates in planning of activities
• Provides critique and participates in assessment activities

Characteristics of Effective Partnerships

• Joint exploration of goals and interests
• Creation of a mutually rewarding agenda
• Emphasis on positive consequences for each partner
• Identification of opportunities for early successes
• Focus on knowledge exchange, shared learning, and capacity-building
• Attention to communication, cultivation of trust
• Commitment to continuous assessment of the partnership itself, as well as outcomes
Sustaining Partnerships
• Invest the time to build understanding
• Create formal partnership structures
• Articulate substantive roles for all partners
• Meet regularly and often
• Involve/employ citizens in projects from the start
• Collaborate in identifying funding
• Create a timeline; short and long goals
• Take time to assess and reflect together
• Celebrate
• Focus on LEARNING

Activity 4
• Thinking about the “Characteristics of Effective Partnerships” as they apply to your own partnership experiences, on what factors do you believe the partnership was strong or weak?
• List 3-5 strategies you might use to more fully realize the characteristics of effective partnerships.

Learning is the Connection
• Learning:
  - About each other’s capacity
  - About each other’s goals
  - To develop students through SL
  - To exchange expertise
  - To share control and direction
  - Through assessment and documentation
  - To experiment; to fail; to try again—To Trust!

Service Learning and Students
• Increases retention
• Makes learning relevant
• Influences career and major selection
• Develops social responsibility and leadership
• Personalizes educational experiences
• Encourages students to be participants in community
• Promotes exploration of values
• Demonstrates the link between work and service

University/Community Partnerships
Service Learning and Faculty
• Promotes innovation and creativity in teaching approaches
• Renews love of teaching
• Suggests new lines of research
• Links personal values with profession
• Links knowledge to action
• Leads to multidisciplinary activities

Service Learning and Community
• Develop role as co-teachers
• Influence student goals & attitudes
• Gain capacity to serve clientele
• Participate in research/assessment
• Gain new perspectives on services
• Build new community networks
• Gather evidence for policy and fund support
• Potential for future collaborations

Elements of Course Design
FOR PARTNERSHIP DISCUSSION:
• What are the expected learning outcomes?
• What are community expectations?
• How does SL help us reach those outcomes/goals?
• What behavior/action will be evidence of mastery of content by students?
• How will we measure impact on community and students? (positive/negative; intended or not)
• How will the relationship be sustained?

Exemplary Service-Learning Syllabi
• State the goal(s) for including service and specific learning objectives related to course content
• Describe how and what will be evaluated
• Describe the service placement
• Specify skills, roles and responsibilities of students
• Describe the community’s goals and roles; provide contact information
• Specify how students will demonstrate learning
• Describe reflection strategies and purposes

Partners as Co-teachers
• Discuss learning objectives for the course
• Link course objectives to partner organization objectives
• Identify essential skills/attributes needed
• Design learning activities, schedules
• Plan/co-lead orientation
• Supervision on-site; feedback; reflection
• Evaluation of student from both perspectives

Activity 5
• Thinking of your service-learning course, discuss the learning goals for students as expressed by faculty and by community partners.
• Community: What do you want students to learn about your Mission? Clients? Programs? Their own values, careers, etc.
• University: What course goals are you connecting to the service-learning experience?

Activity 6
• Identify 1-2 service-learning activity strategies that would serve both course and community learning objectives.
  OR
• Discuss how the community partner could participate in preparing students for their service-learning experience.
Challenges and Needs

• Dependency on early leaders; need to build critical mass and broad involvement in both campus and community

• Redesign academic work to include community expertise and participation

• Dependency on external funding; need to invest institutional assets; seek joint funding

• Lack of a common language across partners

• Better tools for assessing the quality of this work, its impacts, its effectiveness

• Time!! Patience! Time! Did I mention Time?

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