University Outreach and Engagement: Conducting Community Impact Assessment

Henry R. Cunningham, PhD

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1. Community outreach and engagement
2. Assessing university-community partnerships
3. Developing the research questions
4. Methodology utilized
5. Conclusions/Follow up
Universities are engaged in many partnerships in various areas

How do we know our programs are making a difference in the community?

There is need for regular community impact assessment

Explore process University of Louisville utilized to assess community impact
In 2010, the first community impact assessment was conducted

1. To examine the impact of the *Signature Partnership Initiative* on west Louisville
2. To determine the perception of community partners
3. To determine the factors contributing to success
Community Impact Survey

- The second *community impact survey* (CIS) administered in 2013
- Purpose was to assess impact of university-community partnership and identify areas for continued growth and improvement
- Focused on key areas resulting from 2010 study
- Incorporated suggested questions from *Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement* (Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2006)
- Survey instrument was vetted through various groups including faculty and staff on campus
Research Questions

• What is the impact these partnerships are having on the community?
  ▪ How does the community perceive UofL and are these partnerships mutually beneficial?
  ▪ How can we strengthen our existing partnership?
What is the impact that these partnerships are making on the community?

1. How did your interactions with the university influence your capacity to fulfill the mission of your organization?

2. What were some of the economic effects of your work with the university?

3. Did this partnership affect the following (resource, behavior change, completion of project, project outcome), if so, how?

4. How do you define success with regard to your program impacting who you serve (e.g.: people served, jobs created)?

5. Have there been any new programs implemented as a result of your partnership with UofL?
What is the perception community partners have of the University of Louisville?

1. As a result of your connection to the University of Louisville, how has your awareness of the university changed?

2. Do you plan to continue partnering with the university in this or another activity?

3. In what ways do you believe that you are able to influence the university as a result of this partnership(s)?

4. Please rate your level of satisfaction with your connection to the University of Louisville in the following areas. (Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied)

5. What was the best aspect of the partnership for you?

6. Do you perceive mutual benefit between the university and the community?

7. Does the reputation of the University of Louisville promote creating relationships with the community?
Research Questions Cont’d

Questions designed to identify any challenges that exist as well as opportunities for improvement to enhance collaboration

1. What are some of the challenges you encountered?
2. What could the University do differently to enhance collaboration with community partners?
3. Does the reputation of the University of Louisville serve as an impediment to creating relationships with the community?
Methodology

Identifying the Community Partners

- Annual University Partnership Data Collection - the list was narrowed down to all partners with more than one partnership with the university.
- From this list, the initial eight partners were strategically chosen
  - they had longstanding relations
  - They would feel more comfortable answering questions and providing feedback on the instrument
Initial Interviews

- Interviews held with the initial eight partners.
- After interviews were conducted, questions regarding clarity, comprehension and applicability of survey were asked to individuals and their organizations.
- The interviewees provided suggestions to improve clarity, comprehension and applicability of the instrument.
Finalizing the Instrument

• Recurring themes and saturation of data were evaluated
• Modifications to the survey instrument were made based on recurring themes and feedback from initial survey
Methodology Cont’d

- The final phase consisted of interviews with 27 partners using the modified survey instrument.
- The 27 were randomly chosen from the list of community partners.
Data Analysis

• Management and initial coding of qualitative data was conducted using NVivo data management software.

• Audiotapes of survey interviews were transcribed by the researcher and verified by others on the research team for accuracy.

• Descriptive coding was conducted in order to organize, categorize and contextualize data (Richards & Morse, 2007).
• Analytic coding using line-by-line analysis was conducted to identify emerging patterns, categories, concepts and themes.
• The coding framework involved the use of constant comparison analysis and open-coding methods.
• This allowed for dissecting, comparing, and categorizing the data, which resulted in more in-depth emergent themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
Conclusion

• The university has established a process for measuring community impact, community perceptions, and strengths and weaknesses of partnerships
• Several challenges in partnering with the university were identified
• Suggestions were made on enhancing the partnership
• Findings provided a roadmap for the university to build on existing partnerships
Henry R. Cunningham
Director, Community Engagement
Phone: (502)852-6026
E-mail: h.cunningham@louisville.edu
www.louisville.edu/communityengagement