

Community Engagement Task Force Final Report

February 1, 2013

Introduction

The Community Engagement Task Force (CETF) addressed the broad community parameters of San Diego State University. It also included four core elements (working groups) that define the interactions between our campus and the community and the future of our partnerships – Alumni Engagement, Campus Climate, Economic Development and K-12 Partnerships. The CETF and its working groups addressed the four framing questions of our charge noting the need to consider current strengths, emerging opportunities and the ability of the campus to address challenges.

The specific charge to the Task Force, rather than its working groups, was to consider current initiatives in which we and our partners are engaged and to determine how we can best take advantage of whether we should focus on specific areas and/or develop new initiatives aligned with our academic goals. We are engaged in such a broad spectrum of community engagement activities, from KPBS to the Osher Institute to academic internships to the Compact for Success to the Looking Glass Neighborhood to the Zahn Center (just to name a few) that it would be difficult to identify them all, let alone evaluate them in a meaningful manner in the relatively short time allotted us. However, it is clear that SDSU already has significant strengths in all areas of community engagement.

The strategic plan must include a balance of proposed approaches for revenue generation and expenditures to ensure that the investments into new opportunities are sustainable. It must also recognize that not all initiatives directly generate revenue but that strengthening our ties with our community can bring other benefits to the university. The proposed concepts are based upon broad campus and community input and group discussions. A draft budget is included in Appendix A.

Three themes emerged from these discussions. It is important to note that the overriding goal of the strategic plan is to ensure that our students get the best educational experience possible at SDSU. These recommendations will enhance the educational opportunities for our students, both while at SDSU and after graduation, by building strong relationships with our community, industry, and government. This includes ensuring that SDSU responds to San Diego workforce needs.

Themes: Communicate, Connect and Assess

Three pervasive themes were emphasized in all of the working groups reports and were equally apparent in the Task Force discussions and forums.

Communicate: Although the campus has many means and media for communicating, community members continually expressed the need for effective communication, ease of access to information and responsiveness.

Community Engagement Task Draft Force Report

January 17, 2013

Connect: The San Diego State University community connects with many groups and for a variety of reasons. Community members expressed a need to continue to expand these relationships, and to organize connections in a way that presents a unified impression of campus and facilitates the coordination of outreach efforts.

Assess: The campus community values evidence-based decision making. Hence, it is important that we have clear milestones and criteria for evaluating the success of any recommendations and all discussions pointed toward the need to continue this approach. Campus Climate discussions, for example, included this theme as a way to learn who we are today as a campus.

Communicate / Connect / Assess:

Although we have many methods for communicating, it is clear that we have a need for more effective communication and ease of access to information, both for people within the university and for external collaborators. Research suggests that improved communication for the purpose of human connectivity, often leads to higher employee satisfaction and improved morale. We need more effective mechanisms to connect people across campus, including research groups, interdisciplinary programs, and faculty-staff interactions.

By more effectively connecting members of the campus community to the local community, the business community, and alumni, we can enhance opportunities for our students and develop new revenue sources for the university. Inadequate communication impedes SDSU at every level and in every medium.

The need for evidence-based decision making also requires that we periodically survey faculty and staff on morale, engagement, and other issues related to campus and campus climate. The last such surveys were undertaken in 2008 during the Shared Vision process and a campus climate survey was done in 2004. SDSU does not have empirical measures of the opinions and needs of faculty and staff. Regular surveys would provide statistical information on challenges and opportunities.

Recommendation 1:

- "SDSU Connect"

Restructure/develop communication/information infrastructure systems to facilitate interaction among the campus and its communities. This restructure could include:

- coordinating community engagement;
- coordinating alumni volunteerism;
- coordinating K12 projects;
- economic development needs

Community Engagement Task Draft Force Report

January 17, 2013

Enhanced connections should include a central repository for information on varying initiatives and work to facilitate collaborative projects. It may be possible to reallocate some resources to achieve these goals; however, we also consider that selective hiring could facilitate the process.

Community Engagement:

Develop programming on campus for faculty and staff to expand our connections and strengthen our relationships; meet regularly with college area community groups; institute surveys of faculty and staff (3-5 years)

- Alumni Volunteer Coordinator:

Develop relationships with key campus constituents who utilize volunteers, providing a resource alumni and the community to help students succeed. The duties of the position would focus on utilizing student interest data and other known alumni data to establish comprehensive virtual volunteerism, including mentorship. The position would also play a key role in development opportunities.

Create an advisory board to support the strategies for engaging volunteers; K-12 advocates, alumni business leaders would be key figures to link diverse initiatives. This advisory board would also have strong representation from Student Affairs, the colleges.

- K-12 Liaison:

Coordinate, focus and initiate community engagement and partnership development for parents, students, business, industry, schools, and districts.

Create an advisory board to support the strategies for assessing and developing partnerships: K-12 advocates, alumni business leaders would be key figures to link diverse initiatives.

- Economic Development Coordination:

Coordinate, focus and initiate community engagement and partnership development between campus faculty, programs, and leadership with private and public partners ranging from local to national entities.

Develop an Industrial Affiliate Program and an Industry Advisory Board.

Emphasize SDSU's unique opportunity to create partnerships that directly benefit local companies and SDSU students.

Budget Implications:

SDSU lacks a developed infrastructure for community engagement. The Alumni Working Group and the Campus Climate Working Group both considered funding for the necessary infrastructure. K-12 also stressed the need for an information liaison. We have included them in our budget, and also include a liaison for economic development. As noted above, it may be possible to reallocate some resources toward these functions. The budget we present could thus be reduced. Estimated 3 year total: \$840,000.

January 17, 2013

Recommendation 2:

Based on the **K-12** group analysis and discussions, preparing English-language learners for university education should be a clear priority in the San Diego region. A focus on bilingual programs is critical. With SDSU's recent designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution, we also must be proactive in seeking grants that our now open to us.

Recommendation:

Initiate a program that will establish SDSU as a national leader in the field. We must assess our strengths in this area. However, a tenure-track hire in maybe essential, with possibilities for future cluster hires if this initiative were to be considered an area of excellence to develop.

Budget implications:

We include an estimated budget, with salary for 12-month faculty member charged with developing/coordinating K-12 English language learner programs and funds for initial start-up programs to be determined by working with the K-12 group.¹

Estimated 3 year total: \$600K

This initiative has the possibility of generating revenue for its programs and buyout of faculty time through HIS grants.

Recommendation 3:

The **Economic Development** Working Group set three goals including evolving the campus culture, strengthening key areas and enhancing community outreach and collaboration with varied tactics to put them forward. Technology transfer, entrepreneurship, partnerships with businesses, incubators that would promote new opportunities for SDSU faculty and students. Suggestions were put forward to recognize and embrace entrepreneurial partnerships on and off campus (e.g. technology accelerators), provide opportunities to expand new and existing linkages (e.g. faculty training in target areas: intellectual property), as well as increasing our visibility and direct engagement of the private sectors with advisory or affiliate programs.

One important concept included the notion of strategic hiring (often called "cluster" hiring) to facilitate these goals, to strengthen existing programs and to increase inter-college collaborations. Such hires also respond to the critical need to rebuild our tenure-track faculty. To begin this process there needs to be a clearly identified group/groups that would be the target of such development to best assess factors such as:

- a) the number of faculty to be hired and the associated funding required;
- b) the potential financial sustainability of the group;
- c) existing strengths already on the campus;
- d) the cross-campus structure and impact of proposed cluster.

¹ K-12 Liaison funding including in "SDSU Connect" recommendation.

Community Engagement Task Draft Force Report

January 17, 2013

Focusing on areas of excellence can also enhance the acquisition of external resources that benefit the campus. For example, the Bioscience Center has brought together a number of researchers addressing research problems that are both basic and applied (<http://www.sci.sdsu.edu/bsc/>) and has garnered both private (Shiley, Gold and others) and public (NIH, etc) funding.

In addition, the campus should leverage resources from the College of Extended Studies to meet the needs of our community, and to provide revenues to support other valuable campus programs.

Recommendation:

-Determine specific area for strategic hires in areas that will develop or enhance areas of excellence and increase their competitive edge.

Budget implications:

Allocate up to \$3 million to cover initial salaries, start-up programs, etc. Specific budgetary breakdown is dependant upon the research and academic area/s.

[See Appendix 1 for budgetary breakdown.](#)

Please refer to Final Reports of Working Groups for other background information:

<http://go.sdsu.edu/strategicplan/files/01461-economicdevfinalrpt.pdf>

<http://go.sdsu.edu/strategicplan/files/01453-wgcampusclimatefinalreport1216122.pdf>

<http://go.sdsu.edu/strategicplan/files/01451-wgk12partnershipsfinal122112.pdf>

<http://go.sdsu.edu/strategicplan/files/01452-wgalumniengagementfinal122012.pdf>