

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2007 – 2012

Approved by Dr. Theodore Lucas, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affair on October 26, 2007

INTRODUCTION

In 2006-2007 the Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement (OSL-CE) embarked on the development of our five year strategic plan that articulates the new Center for Community Engagement's (CCE) pioneering vision and mission for service learning (SL), civic and community engagement. A diverse group of more than 40 people, representing key stakeholder groups (faculty, students, community partners, staff and administrators) created the focus question that the strategic plan would answer, collectively told the history of service learning and civic engagement at California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI), identified lessons learned from the history, assessed the current context and identified key vision elements they would like to see in five years. A smaller group of 7 community partners, students, faculty and staff drew from the focus question and vision elements to draft vision and mission statements, identify key barriers to the vision, identify four key five year strategic directions, and create a one-year implementation plan.

FOCUS QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED BY THE STRATEGIC PLAN

How can the Center for Community Engagement best advance the University's mission to:

- ◆ support student success by educating students to be civically engaged and able participants in a democratic society;
- ◆ build reciprocal long term-sustainable community partnerships, and;
- ◆ advance faculty teaching and scholarship through the development of faculty expertise in service learning pedagogies and community based research.

HISTORY

The citizens of our region actively sought a California State University (CSU) campus for over thirty years, and since its infancy, CSUCI has enjoyed extraordinary support from the local community. CSUCI opened in fall 2003 and is the newest of the 23 campus CSU system; and the first four-year public university in Ventura County.

Service learning and civic engagement are core elements of the CSUCI's mission. President Rush brings vision, experience, and a commitment to community engagement to support this mission. He serves as Chair of California Campus Compact and is a member of the Board of Director of National Campus Compact.

In academic year (AY) 2004-2005, a subgrant from Learn and Serve Higher Education and the CSU Chancellor's Office supported the creation of an interim Service Learning and Civic Engagement Office (SLCE) including an Interim Director and Assistant Director. During 2004-2005, 6 mini-grants supported faculty, community partners, and students in attending service learning workshops, in collaboratively developing new service learning courses and in strengthening existing courses. The SLCE Office created and published SL resource guides to orient faculty, community partners, and students to SL principles, forms, and practices. Service learning as a pathway to civic engagement was featured at Faculty Orientation and joint faculty and community partner workshops.

In spring 2005, approximately 150 CSUCI students participated in SL courses providing 4680 hours of service. During fall 2005 that number increased to 238 service learners placed in the community. The number of students participating in a SL course and the number of community partnerships have continued to steadily increase over the years. In AY 2006-2007 thirty SL courses and approximately 400 CSUCI students participated in service learning; and the SLCE Office has formalized 30 community partnerships. Academic SL opportunities were provided within general education and in courses that are a requirement of the degree program. Many of the SL courses created offered more than one section. As a result, there were more opportunities for CSUCI students to participate in SL. Academic SL occurred in multiple disciplines such as Art, Business, English, Education, Environmental Science and Resource Management, History, Liberal Studies, and Sociology.

To support this increased participation the SLCE Office has focused on the following primary activities:

- ◆ Providing faculty and community partner development
- ◆ Creating student leadership opportunities
- ◆ Building sustainable partnerships with the community
- ◆ Offering mini-grants to develop new service-learning courses and academic program degree requirements
- ◆ Partnering with Student Affairs to integrate academic SL with co-curricular activities
- ◆ Using technology to promote faculty, student and community partner work

Significantly a resolution to establish one of four University-wide mission based centers, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), was introduced to the Academic Senate in spring 2006. The establishment of this new mission-based center resulted in increased institutional support of SL as evidenced by the recent appointment of two Faculty Co-Directors to provide leadership, counsel, and feedback as they work with the Academic Senate in establishing policies for SL, civic and community engagement

Throughout the implementation of SL, a commitment to civic engagement has always been at the core of the University and supported by key campus leaders. The Center's dedication to serve as a regional convener, trainer, and advocate for community identified needs remains high. The CCE has built its infrastructure systems while simultaneously supporting the increase of faculty and student participation in service learning; as a result, we are now positioned to focus our efforts on continuing to build our institutional and internal capacity, engage the campus and local communities by increasing faculty, student and community partner involvement in SL initiatives and develop student leadership opportunities.

ASSESSING THE CURRENT CONTEXT

CSUCI is located in a rural Ventura County (VC), just north of Los Angeles County and, is the 12th most populous in California with 753,197 people (2000 census). Approximately 37.6% of county households have an annual income below the state median of \$50,000 while 25% of its residents live on incomes at 200% of federal poverty level or below. Latinos comprise 37% of the overall population, and 21% of our residents are immigrants, primarily from Mexico, with growing numbers from Central and South America. Farm workers make up 5% of VC households but 29% of its very low-income households. Many farmworkers find housing in mobile home parks and farm labor camps, often in overcrowded, substandard rental housing, primarily in the Oxnard and Santa Paula areas.

These are two of the poorest communities in VC and are located near the CSUCI campus. Oxnard is the county's largest and fastest growing city (pop. 183,587). In Oxnard, 11.4% of families and 15% of single adults live at or below the federal poverty level. Since 62% of Oxnard residents are Latino, Spanish is a primary language for 54.8% of its residents. Almost one-third of adult residents have not graduated high school. In Santa Paula (pop. 28,782), 71% of the population is of Latino origin and 56.4% of its residents use Spanish as their primary language. Approximately 12.2% of its families and 14.7 % of its single adults live at or below poverty level.

Most significantly, K-12 school and pupil achievement levels in the school districts serving these communities are extraordinarily low. The Oxnard Elementary District serves an 88% Latino student body and has 15 schools "in need of improvement" based on the Adequate Yearly Progress index (AYP). Approximately 76% of 8th grade students score at Basic to Far below Basic levels in English and 75% of its 7th graders are at Basic to Far below Basic in Math. Similarly alarming achievement rates are indicated in test results from the Santa Paula Elementary School District where 78% of its 7th and 8th grade students

are at Basic or Far below Basic in English and Math. These students are ill equipped to succeed in high school and/or access skilled jobs or higher education opportunities.

Youth in Oxnard and Santa Paula are challenged by poverty and inadequate English language proficiency, often leading to a lack of self-esteem as learners. In 2004 the SLCE Office conducted two community needs and assets surveys and interviews with non-profit and educational community leaders. Consistently, educators and program directors identified academic and social support for youth disadvantaged by poverty and/or inadequate language proficiency as a pressing need. The Liberal Studies and Education programs at CSUCI have already developed SL courses and field placements with these local schools to increase literacy and critical thinking skills.

While the current context provides many community engagement opportunities for students, the remote location of the University in proximity to these communities presents accessibility challenges. For example, students struggle with the high cost of gas, time, location of community service sites, and mixed reception from the community. Faculty have a genuine interest in seeing students become more engaged with the community, however, faculty workload at a start-up university, SL not being included in the Retention, Tenure and Promotion process, and lack of incentives to take on additional SL work prevents them from being involved.

Overall, students positively reported that they learned course content better when connections to real life situations were made, their SL participation showed them how to be more civically involved, and that they would recommend a SL course to other students. Additionally, a majority of SL students reported that the community partner had contributed to their learning.

Similarly, faculty and community partners responded positively about the benefits SL to students and the community; however, the time involved in implementing SL and participating was sometimes prohibitive.

As a newly established Center we seek to increase our mutual resources --to strengthen and expand partnerships while building a SL program that promotes civic engagement and social responsibility in CSUCI students and graduates.

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT'S VISION STATEMENT

CSUCI and the local and global communities engage as active members of society for mutual and positive impact.

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT'S MISSION STATEMENT

To foster a learning community that facilitates learning for civic engagement in our local and global communities; and that addresses societal challenges through long term sustainable partnerships.

CRITICAL BARRIERS TO THE VISION

The Strategic Planning Committee with input from the broader group stakeholders identified the following key barriers to the Center for Community Engagement's vision:

- ◆ Service learning and civic engagement are integrated sporadically throughout the institution.
- ◆ There is not a shared understanding of service learning and civic engagement concepts and practices.
- ◆ Negative perceptions/experiences among faculty, community partners and students discourage participation in service learning.
- ◆ Service learning and civic engagement are not sufficiently utilized as a strategy for the University to reach its goals.

- ◆ The current litigious nature of California and the CSU provides barriers to university/community partnerships.
- ◆ CSUCI's remote location limits its presence in the community and the community's presence on campus.
- ◆ University processes can be foreign, complex, and time-consuming for faculty and community partners.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND GOALS

In order to address the barriers listed above, the CCE's Strategic Planning Committee agreed on four strategic directions for 2007-2012:

1. *Institutionalizing the Center mission throughout the educational experience*
2. *Facilitating University/Community dialogue about societal challenges*
3. *Creating an optimal Center organizational structure for all stakeholders*
4. *Designing and implementing Center communication campaigns*

Under each strategic direction, several five-year goals were identified, which are outlined below.

1. Institutionalizing the Center Mission throughout the educational experience
 - a. Integrate the University and Center Mission across the curriculum
 - b. Broaden faculty and community partner development
 - c. Explore student leadership opportunities
2. Facilitating University/Community Dialogue about Societal Challenges
 - a. Develop plan to strategically build community partnerships (e.g., location, type of services, discipline)
 - b. Convene coffee house series (discussions) for students, community, faculty/staff
 - c. Invite and host community group meetings on campus
 - d. Extend the university out in the community
 - e. Explore possibility of community-based space
3. Creating Optimal Organizational Structure for All Stakeholders
 - a. Refine processes for Center governance and use
 - b. Develop solutions to logistical barriers
4. Designing and Implementing Communication Campaigns
 - a. Design and implement internal communication campaign
 - b. Create and implement external communication campaign

YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In academic year 2007-2008 the CCE will focus its efforts on four areas:

1. Institutionalize the Center mission throughout the educational experience,
2. Create optimal structure for all stakeholders,
3. Facilitate University-Community Dialogue about societal issues, and;
4. Design and implement an internal/external communication campaign. The following goals and activities will support these strategic directions. We have included the timeframe in which they will be implemented.

Strategic Direction # 1		Institutionalizing the Center Mission throughout the educational experience	
I-5 Year Goal		a. Integrate the University and Center Mission across the curriculum	
Year 1 Activities		Year 1 Measurable Outcomes	Year 1 Timeline
1. Bookend the Curriculum: development/integration and pilot assessment of University 110 (first year experience course at CSUCI) and Capstone (senior culminating experience) faculty.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide 1 curriculum development/integration workshop for up to 6 faculty proposing to teach University 110 and SL Capstone courses and their community partners. ➤ Host a capstone fair so that students can present their experiences, findings, and community benefits of their service learning/community-based research/civic engagement projects. The fair will be open to the campus and community at large. 	Spring 08
2. Integrate new and existing campus initiatives: Provide support for new and existing initiatives such as the American Democracy Project (ADP), Bracero History Project, Cesar Chavez Day Celebration, and other community engagement and SL initiatives.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide 2 ADP faculty curriculum development mini-grants for the creation on 2 SL courses. ➤ Provide up to 5 Bracero History Project SL Courses (100 students) with the training needed to conduct oral histories. 	Spring 08
3. Create a process for developing a strategic plan for community partnerships (consider other initiatives; ADP, Bracero Project, and all stakeholder initiatives).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Process and procedure are created. 	Spring 08
4. Discuss and define criteria for civic engagement, service learning and community engagement.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Approval criteria for course designation. 	Spring 08

1-5 Year Goal	c. Explore student leadership opportunities		
Year 1 Activities	Year 1 Measurable Outcomes		Year 1 Timeline
1. Research and identify student leadership models for students working in the Center.	➤ Implement a Student Leadership model to prepare and support students working in the Center.		Spring 08
2. Collaborate with Student Affairs, community partners on student leadership workshops.	➤ Provide 3 leadership trainings a semester leveraging services from Student Affairs, community leaders and agency staff.		Fall 07- Spring 08

Strategic Direction # 2			
Facilitating University/Community Dialogue About Societal Issues			
1-5 Year Goal	b. Convene coffee house series (discussions) for students, community, faculty/staff		
Year 1 Activities	Year 1 Measurable Outcomes		Year 1 Timeline
1. Community Engagement Coffee House Series: The series will be used as a forum to civically engage the campus and local communities in dialogue about local, national, and global issues. Community leaders, community members, students, and faculty will engage in facilitated discussions about societal issues.	➤ Coffee House Series is implemented in 2 central community locations and up to 6 speakers will be hosted throughout the series.		Fall 07 and Spring 08

Strategic Direction # 3			
Creating Optimal Organizational Structure For All Stakeholders			
1-5 Year Goal	a. Refine Processes for Center governance and use		
Year 1 Activities	Year 1 Measurable Outcomes		Year 1 Timeline
1. Define Advisory Board membership bylaws and participation criteria. Appoint Advisory Board members and host annual retreat to unveil the strategic plan and to identify members' interest and assets for accomplishing first year goals.	➤ Advisory Board members will be appointed, as defined by the bylaws. ➤ Advisory Board member participation criteria will be developed.		Spring 08

Strategic Direction # 4 Designing and Implementing Communication Campaigns		
I-5 Year Goal	a. Design and implement internal communication campaign	
Year 1 Activities	Year 1 Measurable Outcomes	Year 1 Timeline
1. Design and implement an internal/external communication campaign which includes: disseminating the strategic plan, promoting new goals and strategic directions, sharing present and past accomplishments, educating the campus President, key administrators, key offices (student affairs, faculty development, advancement, & ORSP), local community organizations, community leaders; about new initiatives, student engagement, and community partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phase I of the Communication Campaign which includes: strategic plan executive summary, internal Campaign meeting schedule, Center Open House; is developed. ➤ Copies of the strategic plan executive summary/annual report are printed and disseminated to broad audiences including both the campus and the community. Plan will be posted to website. 	Spring 08
2. Utilize the Center's student leadership program to create a presence on campus and in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student leaders will provide service learning orientations to students enrolled in courses with a service learning component. ➤ Student leaders will provide up to 2 outreach workshops in the community. ➤ Student leaders will promote all Center events on campus. 	Spring 08
I-5 Year Goal	a. Design and implement an external communication campaign	
Year 1 Activities	Year 1 Measurable Outcomes	Year 1 Timeline
1. Host a spring open house for the Center as part of the Internal/External Communication Campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Up to 40 campus and community members will attend the Center Open House. 	Spring 08

CONCLUSION

Despite contextual and locational challenges, the strategic goals outlined in this strategic plan will complement the CCE's ongoing activities, such as building institutional and internal capacity, engaging the campus and local communities by increasing faculty, student and community partner involvement in SL initiatives and developing student leadership opportunities. As the CCE serves these first year activities and functions, it will continue to reflect, plan and work in partnership with others committed to a similar vision.