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The Role of Partnerships in Achieving the Vision: Tracking and Assessing Community Engagement

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Abstract
This presentation was given at the Virginia Association for Management Analysis and Planning in Richmond, Virginia on October 20, 2016.

Keywords
community engagement, Virginia Commonwealth University, tracking, assessing, community-engaged research, community impact, engagement, analysis, higher education, urban institutions

Disciplines
Higher Education

This conference proceeding is available at VCU Scholars Compass: http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/community_resources/56
The Role of Partnerships in Achieving the Vision: Tracking and Assessing Community Engagement

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The Virginia Association for Management Analysis and Planning
Richmond, Virginia October 20, 2016
Hello
my name is
Today, we will ...

- Learn strategies to develop and maintain strategic partnerships across the institution to embrace and support an expanded set of decision-makers, to ground the efforts in the impact on students, and to coordinate institutional studies.

- Highlight how this can be accomplished through efforts to measure engagement with and impact on communities.
VCU overview

» 31,242 students
» 100 countries represented in student population
» 11,388 employees
» 2,170 full-time instructional faculty
» 7,800 degrees and certificates rewarded (AY 2016)

Carnegie classifications:
• Very high research
• Community engaged

Major NIH Awards / Designations
• CTSA
• NCI Cancer Center
Virginia Commonwealth University

STRATEGIC PLAN: QUEST FOR DISTINCTION

**Theme I**
Become a leader among national research universities in providing all students with high-quality learning/living experiences focused on inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global environment.

**Theme II**
Attain distinction as a fully integrated urban, public research university through contributions in human health, research, scholarship and creative expression that advance knowledge and enhance the quality of life.

**Theme III**
Become a national model for community engagement and regional impact.
Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research

 Calls for an **expanded definition of “decision makers”**, a **student-focused paradigm**, and the **greater coordination of institutional studies**

 But to achieve this vision, it will be necessary to **define, develop and expand the scope and focus of internal partnerships** dealing with community engagement data, outcomes and impact.
Partnership
Starting our VCU Conversation

Collaboration between

• Office of Planning & Decision Support
• Division of Community Engagement

Big picture view

• *What do we know about Community Engagement at VCU?*
• *How can we begin to measure impact of VCU CE on the region?*
• *How do we intentionally align VCU assets with community needs?*

Whole picture view

• *Including “hard” resources as an “asset”*
Mission and Values

**Division of Community Engagement**

The VCU Division of Community Engagement mobilizes university-community partnerships that generate innovative solutions to societal challenges and prepares the engaged citizens of tomorrow.

VCU is a community of engaged citizens, working together, changing lives.

**Office of Planning and Decision Support**

Our mission is to empower decision makers, enhance institutional effectiveness, and maintain compliance through accurate, accessible, and actionable data and analyses.

OPDS will be the institutional resource for strategic planning and decision support.
Why do we need institutional data on community engagement activities and impact?

Institutional Data

- Public mission
- Analyzing institution and policies
- Encouraging networking and collaboration
- Telling the story
- Quality management
- National awards and recognitions

Institutional Data is essential for:

- Telling the story
- Encouraging networking and collaboration
- Quality management
- National awards and recognitions
- Analyzing institution and policies
- Public mission
State of the Field

• Agree there is a need for this kind of data

• No consistent measures

• No ONE way to collect the information

• Largely focused on understanding the landscape
First Step: Identify and define what to collect
What needs to be collected?

Who else would like this information?

What systems are already in place?

What is the operational definition?

Who would be good partner(s)?

How can the information be gathered?
Challenge: Complexities Associated with University Data

- Decentralized, large & complex institutions
- Going broad vs. deep
- Consistency
- Accessibility
- Feasibility
- Sustainability & Responsiveness
Response: Identify and Adapt
Data Collection Mechanisms

Considerations:

• Level of data collection and dissemination
• Existing vs. new system
• Systematic vs. episodic
• Quality and type of the infrastructure
• Resources
VCU’s Most Important Discovery

This is *not* a linear process
Community Engagement Data Collected at VCU

- Service-Learning
- Community-Engaged Research (CEnR)
- Student Community Service
- University-Community partnerships
- Impact as an anchor institution
- Faculty/Staff Community Service

Tools Developed for Community Engagement

**Community Engagement Dashboard**

**Partnership Map**

**Pilot Anchor Measurements**

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**VCU**

**VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY**
Community Engagement Dashboard

University-wide data

- Service-learning
- Student service
- Community-engaged research (CEnR)

VCU
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Make it real.
Open source CTSA technology
Creates a research network
102 universities registered as VIVO users
VCU faculty profiles include:

- Publications
- Research interest areas
- Courses taught
- Other
VCU the **only** university to develop a Community-Engaged Partnership Map extension of VIVO.
The Map includes interactive information about:

- Community organizations
- VCU and VCUHealth units
- Focus topics
- Regional reach
- Activity types
Anchor institutions are defined as, “place-based entities such as universities and hospitals that are tied to their surroundings by mission, invested capital, or relationships to customers, employees, and vendors”

(Dubb, McKinley, & Howard, 2013, p. v)
Pilot Anchor Measurement Framework

**Economic Development**
- Workforce
- Real Estate
- Equitable Hiring

**Education**
- Access
  - Pipeline Programs
  - Students: 1285
  - Matriculants: 109

**Health**
- Access
  - 62.6% non-ER
  - 37.4% ER

**Green & Safe Neighborhoods**
- Safe Campuses & Streets
  - Greening VCU
    - STARS Silver Ranking

**Cultural Vitality**
- Public Events
  - 96% Free
  - 4% Not Free

**Community Building**
- Partnerships
  - Engagement
    - 17,602 Students
    - 1,316,000 Hours
    - $29,675,000 Value

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**VCU**

*VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY*
Other potential IR partners include:

- Student Affairs
- Office of Research
- Human Resources
- Libraries
- Development

- Academic Affairs
- Government Relations
- Public Affairs
- Finance and Administration
- Police
- Alumni Relations
Thank You

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Resources


Resources


http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/community_resources/28/

http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cer_resources/8


https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/muj/index
Resources


VCU Partnership Map [http://communitynetwork.vcu.edu/partnerMap](http://communitynetwork.vcu.edu/partnerMap)

VCU Data Dashboard [http://community.vcu.edu/resources--toolkit/community-engagement-dashboard/](http://community.vcu.edu/resources--toolkit/community-engagement-dashboard/)

Anchor Institutions


Anchor Institutions


