Collaborating for change

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Anchoring the Community

THE DEEPENING ROLE OF URBAN UNIVERSITIES

Coalition of
Urban Serving Universities

ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC &
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES

COALITION OF URBAN SERVING UNIVERSITIES

The Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) is a president-led organization committed to enhancing urban university engagement to increase prosperity and opportunity in the nation's cities and to tackling key urban challenges. The Coalition includes 43 public urban research universities representing all U.S. geographic regions. The USU agenda focuses on creating a competitive workforce, building strong communities, and improving the health of a diverse population. The Coalition of Urban Universities (USU) has partnered with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) to establish an Office of Urban Initiatives, housed at APLU, to jointly lead an urban agenda for the nation's public universities.

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is a research, policy and advocacy organization representing 234 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations. Founded in 1887, APLU is North America's oldest higher education association with member institutions in all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, four U.S. territories, Canada, and Mexico. Annually, member campuses enroll 4.7 million undergraduates and 1.3 million graduate students, award 1.1 million degrees, employ 1.3 million faculty and staff, and conduct $41 billion in university-based research.

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Executive Summary

The Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) is a president-led network of urban serving universities committed to enhancing their role as anchor institutions to advance health equity, strengthen urban communities and economies, and develop a capable workforce. As part of its agenda, USU regularly collects and analyzes data across its network to create a reliable, factual foundation for the universities' work in cities.

This is our third survey tracking the evolving and deepening anchor role of urban serving universities.

Key Findings

- University policies and processes are developing to reflect these institutions' deeper integration into the community.
  - In one-third of USU institutions, students are required to take community-engaged coursework to matriculate. In another quarter, community-engaged coursework was not an institutional requirement, but a significant number of academic programs required it for a major.
  - For two-thirds of the respondents, community-engaged research was considered a key element of faculty success at the institution.
  - Notably, for more than one-third of the survey participants, community-engaged research was a part of the promotion and tenure process.

- Administrative leadership is engaged in the community at the highest level, and a nascent administrative infrastructure has emerged to coordinate, improve, and make visible the depth of these universities' community engagement work.
  - In 22 of the 23 institutions surveyed, the university's administrative head is involved in community engagement in some capacity.
  - For 20 of 22 respondents, the university has an articulated mission or strategy for its community mission.
  - Seventeen of 22 respondents have a designated office to centralize community engagement.
  - In a few cases, the work is diffused throughout the institution and is internalized in a community-engaged identity, becoming the responsibility of all units.

- Measuring impacts and outcomes of community engagement is a growing priority, although it remains a hodgepodge of quantitative and qualitative project data, department data, foundation and federal tracking requirements, and other external or fragmented influences.
  - Promising trends include the development of standardized indicators for all community engagement activities (six institutions) and public, searchable, visual data to communicate university activities and create connections among faculty, staff, students, and the community.

- These findings suggest that the culture of the urban serving institution is evolving and deepening. It is not simply a series of functions that we have measured in the past, but a mode of social responsibility and community responsiveness that drives these institutions' actions and choices.

Introduction

The Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) is a president-led network of urban serving universities committed to enhancing their role as urban anchor institutions to improve urban health, strengthen urban communities and economies, and develop a capable workforce. These institutions are anchors of urban change.

But what does it really mean to be an urban serving university? Is it led and administered differently? Do its students expect more? How does it engage in its community? How is its mission interpreted and articulated in the daily activities of all university stakeholders? How do we measure its activities and impacts? While the lexicon of "urban-serving" is well-established, we still lack systematic data (primary or secondary) to better understand how this concept manifests within any one urban setting. In other words, we simply "know" urban serving universities when we see them.

One part of USU's agenda is to regularly collect and analyze data across its network to move beyond an impressionistic understanding of urban serving universities and to create a reliable, factual foundation for the universities' work in cities.

This report is the third of an ongoing series that looks at the evolving and deepening role of the urban university in the community. This survey examined what it actually means to be an urban serving university, and how achieving that mission is built into a university's administrative, procedural, and cultural structures.

A Framework for Assessing an Urban Serving University

During the summer of 2015, we conducted a case study of the University of Washington Tacoma to identify how urban serving functions are perceived and executed across a single campus. Using the data gleaned from this case, we developed a framework and survey instrument for assessing what being an urban serving university means. The survey was completed by 23 of our almost 40 members at that time.

Conceptually, we should be able to find the urban mission of an urban serving university integrated into its operations horizontally and vertically. Horizontal integration refers to a university's academic mission, which begins in the community—through engagement, targeted student recruitment, expanded access, mentoring, tailored pedagogy, engaged research, timely graduation, well-supported campus student life, expanded networking opportunities, facilitated internships, active job placement, alumni service—and completes the circle of engagement with community that includes its own graduates. Vertical integration focuses on activities that relate to community capacity-building, including urban regeneration; policy engagement; real estate; economic development; and other activities that elevate the social, economic, political, and cultural assets of urban serving universities' metro regions. Thus, through its academic and engagement approaches, an urban serving university becomes the anchor institution and an asset that it promises to be. Put differently, an urban serving university has the following characteristics:

- **Collaborative**—People work together on campus and with the community.

- **Embedded**—Urban serving universities are distinct in that a number of institutional practices and initiatives are considerate of and embedded within the community. This engaged and embedded element is reflected in student demographics, institutional research aligned with community needs, and formal and informal partnerships with local industries and non-profits in support of student success.

- **Inclusive**—Urban serving universities consider the needs of all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and income.

- **Accountable**—Urban serving universities are accountable to their students and to the communities they serve.

Imagined in this manner, an urban serving university can be conceptualized as attaining a particular operational model. We can hypothesize that this model is shaped as follows:
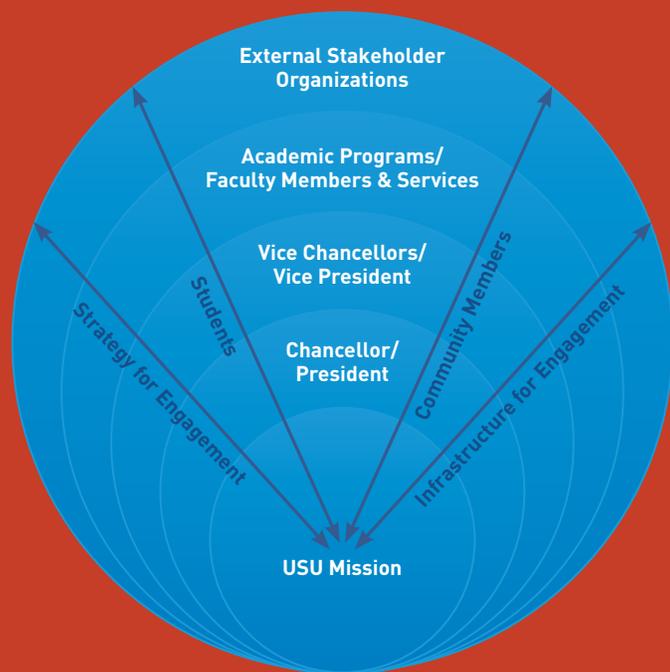
Leadership (Perry and Wiewel, 2005)[1] matters in all institutional instances, so this model focuses on key positions at an urban serving university while paying attention to student-focused functions, academic and research support, community engagement, overall strategy for engagement, and infrastructure for engagement.

The assumption is that a well-designed and articulated urban mission will move through the hierarchies of leadership and manifest in operational activities that shape the overall urban serving nature of a campus. As anchor institutions, urban serving universities are, by nature, engaged with external stakeholders; therefore, such organizations appear in this framework as a continuous component of the USU operations.

The rest of this document is organized as follows: After discussing the survey results, we will use the case study to describe how it works in practice. Specifically, the following points will be addressed:

- What does it mean to be an urban serving university?

- How is an urban serving university structured to achieve its mission?
  - Policies and Processes
  - Leadership and Administrative Structure
  - Measuring Results

- The Unbroken University-Community Circle: Creating Depth in Relationships: The Case of UWT

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1. Perry, David C. and Wim Wiewel. 2005. *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis.* Cleveland State University, Cities and Contemporary Society. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Survey Findings

What Does It Mean to Be an Urban Serving University?

Urban public universities are the educators and employers of the urban population. These universities improve real estate, invest in capital development, provide cultural amenities, strengthen local non-profits, create sustainable places, and work to make safer and more vibrant cities. The survey revealed that urban serving universities do not view their anchor role as a set of functions, but by the social responsibility and community responsiveness that comprises their mission.

An *urban serving* institution is more than an educational institution scaled to the metropolitan setting. Such an institution is embedded in the urban context in a way to promote three reinforcing successes: student, community, and society.

Student Success

The urban environment provides unparalleled opportunities for interacting with a diverse range of communities, causes, and institutions; and it lends itself well to an experiential approach to pedagogy. Due to the proximity and scope of potential partners in a large urban setting, urban serving universities are able to support a high concentration of community-engaged curricula and a high rate of placing students in off-campus co-curricular activities. The urban setting and the opportunities it provides students assist the university meet its educational goals. Practically speaking, "a primary reason for engaging in partnerships with other local organizations is to provide their [urban serving universities'] students with practical educational experiences in an urban setting" (Portland State University).

While most universities have programs to facilitate student volunteerism, USU members see service as an ongoing commitment to make continuous long-term improvements in the community. The forms of service that urban serving universities embrace range from offering medical or social services directly to people to doing collaborative research alongside community organizations. Urban serving universities articulate their work, regardless of its form, in terms of the enduring relationship they sustain with the community.

Community Success

Urban serving universities work in their communities to address critical needs such as health equity, K–16 educational attainment, safety, and neighborhood quality of life. Survey respondents frequently spoke of the experience of being "embedded in the fabric" of the urban surroundings, such that the boundaries between the university and community are fluid. This may be especially true for universities whose main campus sits in the downtown area. For example, The University of Washington Tacoma refurbished much of Tacoma's formerly vacant post-industrial downtown building stock for its campus, and it is now so integrated into the downtown that the university created a wayfinding system to navigate the downtown space, streets, and facilities.

USU members have well-developed, institutionally supported community research agendas, which figure largely in how universities conceptualize their urban-serving identity. Urban serving universities articulate a mode of research characterized by a relationship of reciprocity and mutuality. They recognize that knowledge is produced by both academic researchers and non-academic community partners. This

mutually beneficial relationship requires ongoing efforts to sustain this cycle of knowledge production, whereby the products of research flow back into and enrich the community. Here are some examples.

> " [A USU] deliberately directs the resources of the institution—academic and institutional—to drive community improvement and well-being in partnership with neighbors, and other institutional and organizational stakeholders." (Cleveland State University)

> " [A USU] persists in communities over time, serving as producer of knowledge that assists the community in which it is embedded [and] produce[s] leaders for that community…." (Rutgers-Newark University)

> " We view scholarship as a lens through which we work with the community to help solve some of the most difficult problems we face, such as the issue of underperforming schools." (Florida International University)

Society's Success

Urban serving universities embrace the urban context because it is the prevailing condition and scale of contemporary life. Their students, faculty, and staff engage in a real-world setting. These universities anticipate that most of their graduates will find themselves pursuing their careers in urban places, and aim to teach students to address social problems in a setting that best prepares them for practice in their disciplines. Thus the city provides learning opportunities that enhance graduates' competency and experience. The urban serving university "addresses the challenges and opportunities facing not only the city where it is located but all great cities of the 21st century" (University of Illinois at Chicago).

How Is an Urban Serving University Structured to Achieve its Mission?

Teaching and Research Policies

Previous USU studies have found that experiential and service-learning coursework are an important strategy for bringing together the educational and community engagement missions of anchor universities. In this study, we asked questions about the formal processes that urban serving universities undertake to cultivate engaged research and coursework—whether they are institutionalized in policy and administrative leadership or emerge organically from a community engagement mission shared across the university.

About one-third of the USU members in our study (7 out of 23) require matriculated students to have completed community-engaged coursework. An additional two USU members responded that community-engaged coursework is not required by the university as a whole, but a significant number of academic programs require it for a major.

At State University of New York (SUNY), multiple campuses have been offering applied learning opportunities for some time. In response to 2015 state budget legislation, SUNY has created a plan to make experiential or applied learning activities available to all enrolled SUNY students, with the eventual goal of including approved applied learning activities as a degree requirement across the university system.

Equally, community-engaged research has become important for faculty success at USU institutions (for 18 out of 23 institutions, or 78 percent). For a majority of the respondents (13 out of 23, or 57 percent), it is a criterion for promotion and tenure. As in our 2014 study of a different but overlapping set of institutions, about half reported that engaged scholarship is part of promotion and tenure, the current findings suggest a consistent or growing emphasis on engaged research design as standard practice.

If one feature of community-engaged programs is the shared process of doing the research, of equal importance is the method of designing it to be responsive to the local community. "Use-inspired

Community engagement requirements for matriculating students
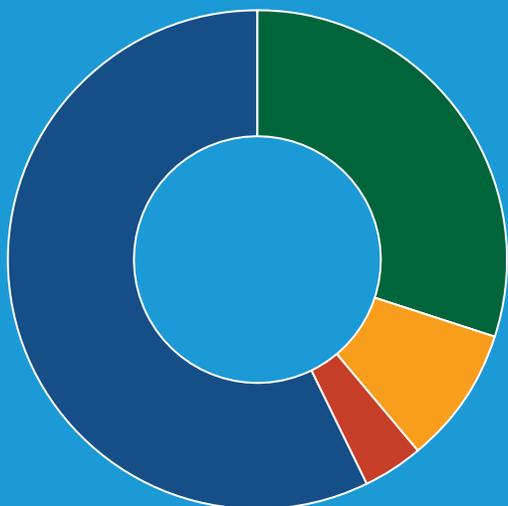
57%	■	No specific community-engagement requirements
30%	■	Community-engaged coursework required by university
9%	■	Community-engaged coursework required by significant number of programs
4%	■	Volunteer community work required by university, but no coursework

Community engaged research for faculty
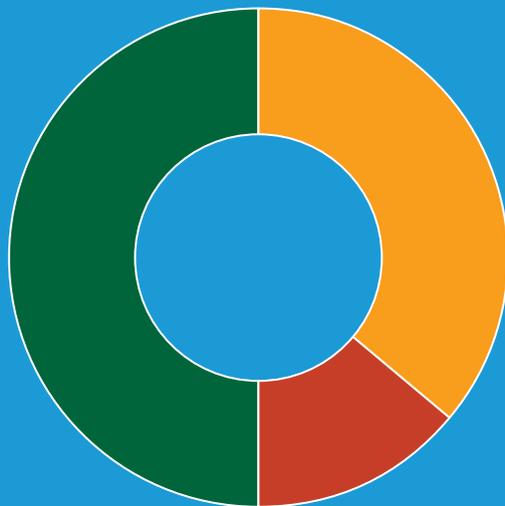
50%	■	Is a key element in faculty success
36%	■	Is a key element in faculty success and is part of Promotion & Tenure
14%	■	Is not a key element in faculty success

research," as some respondents termed it, is of direct use to the public. Like community-based teaching curricula, the field for engaged inquiry is a real-world setting, which enhances its relevance to pressing public needs.

Leadership and Administrative Structure

The results of our 2014 study showed how the administrative structure and leadership of urban serving universities played a role in community engagement activities. For example, all USU members surveyed committed to community engagement in their mission statement and created

an administrative position or office to coordinate engagement efforts. At that time, most USU members were just setting up a system of metrics to capture their roles as anchor institutions. Those findings led us to explore further the formal means by which USU members articulate their mission through university policy and leadership structure.

Current data indicate a growing reach and capacity of the institutional infrastructure that urban public universities use to coordinate, improve, and make visible their community engagement activities. Our analysis revealed that 20 urban serving universities have a mission statement or strategic plan that

TIMELINE

Formal Articulation of the University's Community Engagement Mission

2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014	2015+
University of Memphis	University of Minnesota University of Houston University of Central Florida University of Missouri–Kansas City	California State University, Fullerton California State University, Northridge Florida International University Rutgers University–Newark Temple University State University of New York University at Albany University of New Mexico University of Washington Tacoma	Indiana University– Purdue University Indianapolis Portland State University Wayne State University

formally articulates their community engagement mission, four of which were drafted since 2014. The State University of New York at Albany explained the importance of these documents for large public universities:

> " Assessing and evaluating the urban serving mission of our university is both an inward and outward facing process…The University strategic plan is…a tool used to inform and guide the institution, direct resources and structure monitor[ing] and evaluation. Linking the strategic focus across units to the outcomes intended for an urban serving institution provides multiple opportunities for constituent engagement and inclusion…."

Led by the Office of Public Engagement and university-wide Public Engagement Council, "the University at Albany is currently shifting from a more decentralized, 'thousand points of light' approach of community engagement, towards one that is more coordinated, interdisciplinary, and embedded throughout the institution."

The types of community-based activities that universities engage in crossover institutional divisions are common to the university structure. They may be based in offices for academic affairs,

faculty affairs, or student life, for example. The need for coordinating the many parts of the urban serving mission have inspired varied strategies for doing so. Seventeen USU members now have a designated administrative office for community engagement, which may be headed by a vice chancellor or vice president for community engagement or comparable position. Administrative coordination of community engagement programs was a primary focus for universities engaged in a strategic planning process at the time of the survey.

- Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis created the Office of Community Engagement, led by a vice chancellor, as well as a strategy for its community engagement mission, in 2015.

- Florida International University created the Office of Engagement in 2010 and is continuing to develop that division. Last year, the university hired a new vice president for engagement, who has been tasked with restructuring the office to better serve the changing university goals, which include more strategic development of university partnerships and expanding internship opportunities for students.

Urban serving universities may also use a networked approach, with staff from different offices across the campus alongside a central administrative office.

- At Wayne State University, the Division of Government and Community Affairs—led by a vice president and staffed by directors of community relations, and advocacy and community programs—liaises the university and the community and coordinates the President's Community Advisory Group. In addition to this full-time staff, 50 community engagement officers coordinate this work across the campus.

- At the University of Minnesota, the Office for Public Engagement works with academic programs on all five campuses, is overseen by the associate vice president for public engagement, and reports to the provost's office. This office describes its role as "shepherding" the 200+ units involved in community-engaged research, teaching and outreach, from individual academic departments to key centers such as the Center for Community-Engaged Learning and the Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center. These units are then connected with the university's Ten-Point Plan for Advancing and Institutionalizing Public Engagement.

- At California State University, Northridge, the Office of Community Engagement is led by administrative-level directors and program coordinators and is assisted by an advisory board represented by one faculty member from each of the eight colleges.

While there is an identifiable interest in furthering administrative support for community engagement and centralizing campus efforts, it is not the only model that urban serving universities are using to successfully solidify their community mission and to support and coordinate these activities.

University of Minnesota noted:

> " Our University's engagement model is purposely decentralized whereby we seek ownership of the engagement agenda at the departmental and school/college level. Public engagement is operationalized, defined, and purposed in many different ways across the campus; this is done to

find the best fit for the goals and priorities of the academic (and other) units and the communities with which they are partnered."

Some urban serving universities rely on the diffuse and internalized community-engaged *identity* to drive their programs. For example, Portland State University does not have a designated office, but "community engagement is so thoroughly integrated into PSU programs that it is considered the responsibility of all units." Universities that have or are developing administrative-level offices of engagement most commonly "shepherd" various units toward a shared mission or strategic program, to network existing or potential community and university partners, compile information, and publicize the university's engagement efforts.

Measuring Results

Another strategy used for campus-wide coordination of community engagement activities is to systematize data collection on program outcomes in order to assess the community impact of converging forms of engagement. Almost all (22 out of 23) USU members surveyed collect data on community engagement activities.

As in program coordination, methods of data collection and reporting also take place at a decentralized level, a university-wide level, or a combination of both. Ten of the USU members surveyed reported having an updated, accessible, and centrally maintained data repository. Six of the USU members surveyed have a decentralized system of program evaluation that differs by project and department; and other six USU members are developing standardized indicators that will apply to all community engagement activities within the university. Although measurements may be program-specific, there is a discernible trend toward creating a university-wide data protocol for assessment metrics and performance indicators. Urban serving universities are noticing and responding to an apparent need for standardizing data collection, evaluation, and reporting.

Overall, most USU members are working to maintain specialized methods for assessing project outcomes that are unique to individual programs and offices,

but then compile and organize the data in a central repository to communicate it to the public.

How Universities Measure Program Outcomes

Universities that collect data solely at the program level have tailored their methods to meet the functional needs of individual units or groups of units. For example, The University of Akron does not have campus-wide measures, but programs within the Department of Student Life have data collection mechanisms in place which are maintained on a

How Universities Measure Program Outcomes

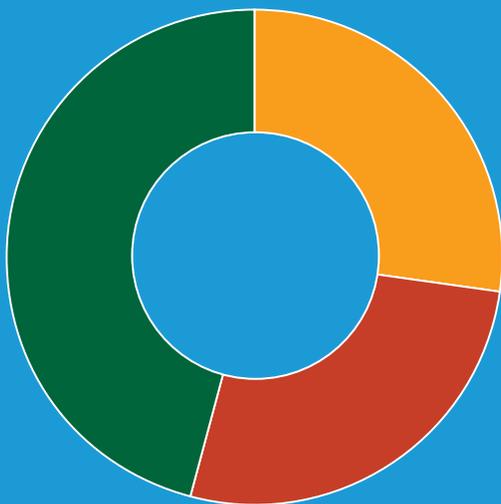|	
46%	Centralized, university-wide system
27%	Decentralized, program-based system
27%	Hybrid methods

shared drive and are reported on each semester. California State University Fullerton does not assess data on community engagement at the university level; instead, the data assessment is "program controlled, which means that each department/unit can determine what types of data, quantitative or qualitative, it collects."

Universities receiving funds for community engagement programs from external agencies may be required to produce particular metrics, thereby initiating specialized evaluation methods. At University of California Riverside, for example, community engagement projects and initiatives housed under Student Affairs and Enrollment Services are either grant- or state-funded, and are therefore required to meet pre-established objectives. The State University of New York Health Science Center at Brooklyn (SUNY Downstate) also reported that measurements are usually outcome-specific and range from informal to formal, with the latter usually for grant-funded projects with specific metrics. In general, grant-funded projects tend to have specific metrics that must be formally recorded for funding eligibility. Consequently, these projects may be documented more fully, but the outcome-specific reporting requirements may contribute to the diffuse nature of data collection, as different external funders request various metrics.

On the other hand, the data collection requirements of external stakeholders are, in some cases, driving USU members to adopt more systematic data collection practices. For example, some USU members (Cleveland State University, Portland State University, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of New Mexico, and University of Central Florida) have applied for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, a process that requires a university to perform a rigorous self-assessment and generate a systematized dataset on certain community-engagement efforts. Generally, respondents who had a formal systematized data procedure adopted it to meet the criteria of grant funders.

In some cases, such a comprehensive dataset may heighten the competitiveness of grant applicants. For example, Temple University administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) every three

years, and for the past two cycles, Temple University chose to append the optional Civic Engagement module. Temple's College of Public Health was then able to receive a Spencer Grant to fund a study on the impact of community-based research in undergraduate learning, civic engagement, and critical thinking. The study will draw on the results of the NSSE Civic Engagement module, looking closely at results of students enrolled in courses where community-based research is a required component.

Universities may be facing increased requests to collect and analyze data, because both external and internal funders require data to measure program performance in order to prioritize the disbursement of limited funds. Temple University, for example, is learning to optimize the data the university is required to collect for expanded use in strategic ways.

The Role of Data

The types of data collected by universities on community engagement programs depend on whether the activity is focused on student experience, faculty research, or community impact via partnerships. Quantitative data include service to community, such as medical care, and acquiring such data typically involves counting the number of community members served. Other familiar measures include publications, presentations from partners, and the amount of financial support received for partnerships. This type of data is often compiled by the university's office of institutional research.

Several USU members evaluate the impact of their more collaborative community engagement work using qualitative methods to get feedback from community partners. For example, University of Missouri–Kansas City conducts surveys and focus groups with impacted residents, while Portland State University uses a fairly involved process for capstone classes in which student portfolios and community reflections are evaluated by faculty committees. This complex set of meaning-oriented data is usually developed as a case study by project leaders.

While our survey demonstrates interesting trends in data collection, it also opens up new areas of inquiry. One unexplored question is whether different data types are used at different scales of the university

and whether that impacts the nature of the urban mission. For example, if qualitative data are collected at the program scale and quantitative data are collected at an institutional or administrative level, will centralizing data practices reduce support for focus groups, surveys, and reflections that target community impact via collaborative processes?

Emerging Trend: Data as Communication

Urban serving universities are also collecting data in order to communicate the meaning and impact of their community engagement activities to the public. University of Missouri–Kansas City, University of Minnesota, and Cleveland State University have developed online databases that compile and present information on engagement. These databases
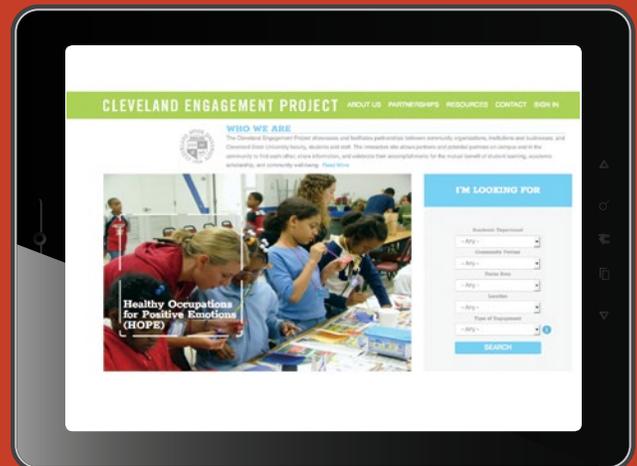
Screenshot from the Cleveland Engagement Project at Cleveland State University

Users can filter by department, community partner, location, focus area, and type of engagement.

Selecting a project will navigate to the project's page, showing its purpose and outcomes, supporters/contributors, and benefit to community, as well as partnership contact information.

are accessible to the public, are searchable and interactive, and are populated largely by self-reported information on featured projects. They showcase the university's engagement efforts while facilitating connections among university students, faculty, and staff who are seeking to participate in or connect with other community organizations.

This format of organizing and communicating information appears to be emerging as a useful tool for urban-serving universities. Several other USU members surveyed mentioned that they are creating online databases very similar to those profiled here.

Conclusion

In this report, we considered whether urban serving universities are centralizing certain features of the university and whether this centralization connects or compartmentalizes departments across the campus. We are observing a strategy to integrate, rather than consolidate, data practices around community engagement activities. This strategy can be seen in the ways that universities are incorporating their measures of community impact into existing reporting procedures, and in the new forms of communication and networking of various units that carry out the urban serving mission.

This observation may indicate the normalization of the urban-serving mission within and among public universities, and, by extension, their performance measures for faculty, staff, and programmatic elements. The integration of information on community engagement into standard university procedures may also suggest that the urban-serving mission is diffusing in ways that other public universities can emulate.

New administrative offices for community engagement and staffing arrangements show that USU members are committed to prioritizing this mission and are willing to allocate resources to it. As public universities are being stretched thin due to economic constraints and limited state budgets, the advances measured here may be challenged if insufficient resources (staff, technology, data systems) cannot be made available to support this work.

While many USU members have created and staffed new offices and information systems, evidence suggests that some universities are striving to do more with less. One USU member indicated that resources were too strained among competing priorities to contribute to this study. Another USU member had recently developed a web-based application to catalog service learning opportunities, to facilitate student participation, but that resource is now defunct because funding was discontinued.

Innovative electronic applications are at the forefront of USU members' advancements in community engagement. These applications simplify, connect, and coordinate users, but they require ongoing investment of resources to maintain adequate administrative and technological support. Urban serving universities will need to manage and respond to the growing expectations for data reporting and connectivity from both internal and external sources.

The Unbroken University–Community Circle

CREATING DEPTH IN RELATIONSHIPS: THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

Using the framework outlined in the report introduction, we explored how University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) articulated and institutionalized its urban serving mission.

Founded in 1990 as one of the three University of Washington campuses, UWT is an urban serving institution closely linked to Tacoma and Puget Sound. An anchor institution, UWT serves a diverse student body of approximately 5,000 students, 80 percent of which are transfer students from local community colleges or other universities.[2]

In 2015, USU surveyed the following key leaders at UWT, whose actions are shaped by and can shape the urban serving mission of the university (see appendix for survey questions):

- Vice chancellors for academic affairs, student and enrollment services, finance and administration, and advancement;

- Special assistant to the chancellor for community engagement; and

- Directors of urban waters, external relations, and the center for leadership and social responsibility.

The findings from these interviews are presented as follows:

- What Does It Mean to Be an Urban Serving University?

- From Narrative to Action
    - Testing Horizontal Integration: Are the Dots Connected Across Campus?
    - Vertical Integration: Strategic Interventions that Build Community

- Measuring and Accessing Results

- Conclusions: The Unbroken University-Community Circle

What Does It Mean to Be an Urban Serving University?

The UWT leaders surveyed shared the following common assumptions about the core characteristics that define their institutions' urban mission: student access; educational pathways to success through excellence, especially for first-generation and non-traditional students; and use-inspired research—scholarship that is guided by its potential use for the society and strives to respond to community problems or needs.

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2. https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/about-uw-tacoma/about-university-washington-tacoma

As one leader shared:

> An urban serving university is connected to priority needs of the region where it is located through mutually beneficial partnerships and evolves as part of the community. Research performed by faculty and students tend[s] to focus more on priority problems and issues of its region…and the university engages in partnerships [that] help achieve the mission. Often, urban serving universities are anchor institutions in a revitalized downtown."

At UWT, it is not enough for an urban serving university to simply be engaged. Rather, the educational access and student support services, which are life-transformative for historically underserved students, must be a part of the mission.

> Being connected…means being accessible for students from this community and creating pathways to access for historically underserved populations. It does not mean lowering the bar for them to enter, which is disrespectful, but rather encouraging achievement. Being connected to our outputs means staying deeply tied to employers within all sectors and building curriculum and degrees that prepare our students for jobs needed to help drive economic, cultural, and community development in our region."

Put in another way:

> There is a mission of access to the local student population along with the responsibility to meet these students where there [they] are and to achieve graduation. I define USUs as those dedicated to the transformative educational access…."

Critically, UWT pays attention to the importance of proactively mitigating the nature of power relations and the ethical challenges of engagement between the university and community.

> We are a campus that takes partnerships seriously in accomplishing its mission. We approach partnerships with an ethic of mutual respect and mutual benefit. We believe that by working together we will find more innovative and sustainable solutions to the problems we (all) face."

Another respondent added:

> We recognize that while our faculty and staff have great expertise, there are others in our communities with skills and knowledge. We will work with such partners in addressing issues of mutual concern (e.g., graduation and college-going rates) and issues of public concern (e.g., public health, environmental, urban design, etc.). We approach partners as equals (vs. the traditional mode of universities as the holders of expert knowledge that is sent "out" into communities) and this means in particular that the power relations between universities and their partners/communities have shifted for an urban serving university. We work to partner as equals (vs. 'serving *them*')."

From UWT's experience, we can tease out three characteristics of urban serving universities:

1. Urban serving is a culture that is socialized into university staff and faculty so that it becomes part of their daily narrative.

2. Urban serving universities develop partnerships of equals, which strengthens that narrative.

3. The university's physical space reflects, or is evolving to reflect, the blurring of boundaries between campus and community.

The dialogue with UWT leadership indicates that the university has embraced its role as an urban serving university and anchor institution (Perry and Wiewel, 2005), having engaged with its external and internal stakeholders in creating a common vision for the region and activating that vision through a partnership of equals. Imagined in this manner, the educational, research, and development goals of the campus move from a unidirectional model (of experts to non-experts) to a bidirectional model in which the university and its activities are shaped by regional stakeholders as much as the university affects its external constituents.

The mission of an anchor or an urban serving university is indeed within the DNA of UWT, a campus whose establishment was advocated for by the community and was nurtured through its past 25 years as an integrated institution of (and for) the South Sound region. This integration can

be seen in the textual and spatial narratives of the campus, where a significant amount of effort has been dedicated to erasing the boundaries between the campus and the communities it serves.

From Narrative to Action

It is not enough for university leaders to understand what an urban serving university is. They should be able to view the activities of their office within the larger urban serving mission of the campus and understand its wider strategic impact. From the data, we were able to categorize UWT's urban-relevant activities into three overlapping groups: relationship building, projects and interventions, and communication.

Relationship-building

Examples of relation-building activities include the following:

- Community relations

- Strategic partnerships

- Government and media relations

- Outreach and service to veterans

- Relationship with Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) (an identified key partner)

- Collaborating with Tacoma Public Schools

- Engaging with economic development offices

- Organizing meetings of community partners

- Connecting student and faculty with community (i.e., increasing the networking potential of students, particularly first-generation students) and vice versa

Projects and Interventions

Illustrative projects include the following:

- Providing a continuum of student services that begin with recruiting and end with job placement and alumni relationship

- Engaging in projects for improving student life on campus (e.g., partnership with YMCA to build the new student center)

- Creating a pedagogical approach and a research agenda that responds to the needs of the community

- Developing real estate and retail in partnership with public and private sectors

- Establishing dedicated centers to focus on community needs (e.g., Urban Waters, Center for Leadership and Social Responsibility, and Veterans Incubator for Better Entrepreneurship)

Communication

These efforts involve interacting with, and developing targeted messaging for, community audiences, including alumni, nonprofit organizations, city governments, state legislators, economic development agencies, corporations, and foundations (re UWT's urban mission).

Notably, university leaders had difficulty estimating the time they allocated to what they interpret to be their urban mission. Only Student and Enrollment Services could provide a detailed accounting of the percentage of each major office member's time dedicated to various urban serving tasks. It is unclear why other offices could not estimate time allocation. Possible explanations include the lack of a measurement system and an unclear definition of "urban serving activity." Overall, it appears that every office interviewed has accepted and is exercising its self-assigned role within the larger urban serving mission of the university.

While culture is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient for a university to fulfill its urban mission. Campus-wide coordination, a clearly articulated collective strategy, or both are needed to join these parts.

Testing Horizontal Coordination: Are the Dots Connected Across Campus?

The framework assumes that deep community engagement driven by the mission of an urban

university should manifest in two measurable ways: 1) in the alignment of the work of individuals and offices to the mission, as demonstrated above; and 2) in the strategic coordination across campus of that mission. In other words, we should detect some type of institution-wide effort that connects the dots among the pieces to maximize reach and impact.

At UWT, all respondents articulated their commitment to the urban serving mission of the university, suggesting that their priorities (as well as the design of their individual programs) are driven by the university's urban mission agenda. However, we could not find a single document at the overall campus level or within any of the offices that fully articulates how the "urban mission" affects their planning and operation. This suggests that an organic understanding of the mission has been developed, which indicates that the urban serving focus has been integrated within the many functions of the university.

Nonetheless, since each office has designed its own set of activities and has created a culture of commitment, it is not clear how these programs relate to each other, and there is no detailed information about various programs or how the overall set of activities impacts the region (i.e., systematic understanding of the impact, qualitatively or quantitatively). Documents may exist about the economic impact of UWT or the nature of its relationship with the military base, but the campus lacks a master document and systematic data collection for all activities, which is essential for measuring the full impact of an urban serving university on its community. In other words, while the culture seems developed, the strategy that can deliver scale and impact still needs evolving.

Vertical Coordination: Strategic Interventions that Build Community

All UWT offices had significant projects and activities reaching deep into the city and region, underscoring the university's commitment to the community. Those activities fall into two categories: student-centered activities and engagement through economic development.

Student-centered Activities

Urban serving universities are of the city, which means that student success is a component of these institutions' anchor role, as are their economic, community, health, and other methods of engagement. UWT illustrates this reality. Given that 68 percent of first-year students at UWT come from families with parents without a college education, it is important that every step of recruitment, admission, registration, advisement, and support through graduation be meticulously planned and mapped. A hallmark of an urban serving university is the overall wrap-around services that make college a welcoming environment.

To that end, UWT has created a series of student-centered activities that begin in the community and engage with the educational environment to help create and sustain a college-going culture in the region. One such activity is the Tacoma Whole Child Initiative (TWCI), which is a partnership between UWT and the Tacoma Public Schools. This program is designed to provide a support network to help students succeed in their educational careers.

> Work on the TWCI began in January 2012, sparked by former UW Tacoma Chancellor, the late Debra Friedman, Tacoma Public Schools Superintendent Carla Santorno and Deputy Superintendent Joshua Garcia."[3]

The following are examples of other activities and initiatives related to the creation of a college-going culture:

• Pathways to Promise School District Partnership— Supports partners who are developing a college and career-ready culture in the South Puget Sound. The partnership provides assured admission; customized college planning tools, communication flow, and campus visits; and increased admissions advising.

• Coordinator of Educational Partnerships— Provide career assessment and academic advising services that focus on all Washington State public institution offerings at Army Career and Alumni Program Transition Center.

3. For a full description of this project, please see http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/news/article/focusing-whole-child.

- Events of particular importance to first-generation students are the following:
  - College Goal Sunday Events— On-site events that help students and families access financial aid for college.
  - Washington Council College Planning Days—A one-stop opportunity for high school sophomores, juniors, and undecided seniors to learn about Washington State's higher education options.
  - Tacoma Success Network College Bound Saturday—An event for Tacoma Public Schools students who have applied for the College Bound Scholarship to attend workshops designed to help students prepare for college.

Action Highlight: YWCA

Among the most striking and important achievements of the university is its collaborative project with the YWCA to build a new student center on campus. Since this is a recent achievement of the university, a more detailed description will be provided. While various offices have reported their involvement and pride in the new student center, we have chosen to describe this project under Student Services, where it functionally belongs.

University Y Student Center (UWY) is a partnership between the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) and the YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties. This partnership developed out of the shared missions of both organizations. The University Y Student Center is a 73,000-square foot facility on the University of Washington Tacoma campus that provides space for programs and events, support for student organizations, full-service recreation programs, fitness equipment and classes, and intramural sports. This facility not only provides new space and programs for university students, but also increases the capacity of the YMCA to serve a growing community population in the downtown Tacoma area.

The partnership also provides expanded services to the commuter student population of UWT. Students can use the University Y Student Center when they are on campus, but also have access to nine other YMCA locations throughout the county, located in the communities where students live. Since close to 90 percent of UWT's students live and work 30 miles or less from campus, they are able to work out at any Y facility at no additional cost.

Through this partnership, the facility and programs were designed to bring the university and Tacoma communities together. Students are engaging with the larger community through the shared use of the facility, and community members are exposed to the university campus. This partnership is designed to extend well beyond the physical facility, as students are now volunteering and participating in the YMCA's youth development programs across the county. This partnership has expanded the capacity of both organizations to continue to transform the South Sound community.

The design of this center follows a tradition at UWT which makes space available to the community for various programs. Through UWY Event Space, UWT offers several event and meeting spaces for the community to use. By doing so, UWT is enhancing opportunities for the local community to access space for work or personal events.

Engagement Through Community and Economic Development

In addition to various educational and student-focused activities, urban serving universities engage with a number of community, economic, and real estate development projects that fit within the larger urban regeneration efforts of the cities where these universities are located. In the case of UWT, its establishment and role in reactivating downtown Tacoma is well documented (Coffey and Dierwechter, 2005). The university creates the social and human capital needed to fuel the economy of Tacoma and the South Sound region, and it engages in building the needed infrastructure, repurposing buildings, and adding economic vitality through establishing retail activities. In other words, UWT has assumed a significant role in helping transform this region through both education and investment.

There are many projects and purposeful engagements that help with urban regeneration. For the purpose of this report, it suffices to say that UWT and its leadership play an active role in various economic development offices of the city and the county. A

2014 publication of the University of Washington[4] documents the economic impact of UWT at $211.7 million, $141.5 million of which is in indirect impact. This is an important achievement for a campus with fewer than 5,000 students (at the time) and a short history of 25 years. Given its current growth trajectory, UWT will have significantly more students and a larger area of the city to develop. At its full capacity, UWT will not only be a major employer, but also a major developer in Tacoma and the region.

The following represents a partial list of activities (reported by the Finance and Administration Office of UWT) to illustrate the breadth and scope of these types of efforts.

Major and Minor Works Program

- Prairie Line Trail Activation—Designed, procured, and managed the install of $527,000 worth of furniture for the Prairie Line Trail UWT Station project and University YMCA, providing new and unique spaces for the campus community. This was initially an abandoned rail line, which ran through the heart of the campus. With the new design and repurposing of the space, it has become an important part of the campus. This space is now used by city residents as well and has become the beginning of a much longer trail. The City of Tacoma will continue the construction beyond UWT campus.

- UWT YMCA—Successful completion and opening of the 73,000-square foot UWT-Y Student Center.

- Japanese Language School (JLS) Memorial— Completed and dedicated memorial to the JLS and Japanese community of Tacoma.

- 17th Street project—With some minor delays, successfully completed, in partnership with the City of Tacoma, the realignment of 17th Street. The project was initiated to create a safe environment that would accommodate pedestrians and vehicles. This investment will also support the development of a new hotel and condo complex on adjacent property.

UWT Real Estate

- On the threshold of achieving 100 percent occupancy for Pacific Avenue retail.

- Campus wayfinding—The design of the campus is intended to be an active part of the urban grid. As such, it is not immediately clear what is campus and what is city. The wayfinding is designed to help visitors understand what is in the area and how to navigate to both the UWT programs and to the related city and private businesses that are a part of the university's integrated community.

- Café zones—As a part of its economic development mission, the UWT has committed to creating an active retail presence. For the retail activity to be successful, these businesses must attract customers from beyond the immediate walking or working community. Collaborating with retail consultants and the city, the UWT has created a plan for improved streetscape signage and activities that encourage pedestrian traffic both to the stores and on the streets.

Highlight: Urban Waters

The university partnered primarily with the City of Tacoma to establish a state-sanctioned Innovation Partnership Zone in Urban Clean Water Technology with the Urban Waters facility and faculty at its core. The Economic Development Board was a key player in establishing this center. Tacoma Community College, three to four private businesses, and WSU Puyallup also participated in this effort. Currently, Urban Waters stands out as a major contributor to the health and well-being of the city and its waterfront (a former Superfund site).

The Director of the Center identified the following projects as some examples of what the Center does:

- UW Puget Sound Institute (5.5 full-time equivalent staff scientists)
  - Cooperative agreement with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to synthesize and integrate science and engineering in support of Puget Sound policy. This project requires daily engagement with local, regional,

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4. 2014 Economic and Community Impact Report of the University of Washington. 2014. University of Washington. Retrieved from http://www.washington.edu/externalaffairs/files/2015/01/14-Economic-Impact-Report.pdf

state, federal, and tribal environmental policy leaders.

- Washington Stormwater Center (1 full-time equivalent staff engineer)
  - Collaboration with Washington State University with support from Washington State Department of Ecology
  - Extensive consultation with local and regional businesses and governments on stormwater engineering issues
  - Coordination of the Technology Assessment Program—Ecology equipment certification program
  - Participation in national clean water technology industry groups

- Water Partners of Tacoma
  - Tacoma-based network of water engineers and economic development staff organized to promote the expansion of the clean water technology sector in the region
  - Significant outreach, including sponsorship and organization of the annual Wellspring Conference

Measuring and Assessing Results

Judging from the quantitative list of activities, UWT's involvement in the city appears extensive. However, in the absence of a systematic data collection mechanism, the aggregate impact of this work cannot be fully determined.

When asked how they measure the success of their urban serving projects, or initiatives, almost all respondents offered an answer on specific programs, but much was qualitative. Moreover, the assessments did not (or perhaps could not) segregate the urban serving efforts from the university's wider functions and responsibilities. Methods for measuring the success of UWT programs include (1) surveys and other data collected by Student Services, (2) assessment/evaluation reports done for programs related to JBLM, (3) web-based data analytics performed on marketing and communication, (4) information collected on contracts/grants/

funding/donor metrics, and (5) information assembled on some of the activities.

There are at least two explanations for not creating a systematic and centralized data repository. The first explanation is a structural issue. In the absence of a staffed community engagement office with the central purpose of coordinating data gathering and assembly, each office must rely on its own staff to collect as much information as possible regarding the performance of that office's programs. As such, evaluation reports, surveys, and other collected data are not necessarily created for upon-request dissemination. This also means that, from year to year, there is no guarantee of consistency in data gathering.

The second explanation has to do with definition. During data gathering for this case study, it became clear that on campuses such as UWT, where the urban serving mission is fully integrated into various offices and functions of the university, neither leadership nor staff members clearly distinguish between what constitutes an urban serving activity and what does not. Perhaps a more deliberate distinction between urban serving and non-urban serving functions could become clear if a centralized data repository office existed and data protocols were established for data assembly and dissemination.

Concluding Remarks: The Unbroken University-Community Circle

Political, public and private sector, and nonprofit leadership within the South Sound attest to the importance of UWT to the vitality of Tacoma and Pierce County. This has been editorialized and reported by various media outlets, including the local News Tribune. From April to June 2015 alone, these selected headlines appeared in News Tribune: "It's time to come to terms with Tacoma's shrinking grit," "Capital budget must fund UWT Urban Solutions Center," "UW Tacoma gets state recognition as it celebrates 25th birthday," and "25 years later, deep roots and bumper crops from branch campuses." The Tacoma Daily Index, the Business Examiner, and Exit 133 have also reported on UWT's achievements and community engagements.

All reports, as well as formal and informal conversations, reveal that UWT is deeply committed to its urban mission, and as an anchor institution, it has successfully transformed the region it serves. This translates to a unique achievement rarely observed elsewhere. Community groups, as well as public and private sector organizations, have come to understand and adopt the urban serving lexicon, producing a set of expectations from the university that they helped build and which has in turn reshaped their environment.

In the rush to grow, succeed, bring the transformative power of education to a post-industrial city and region, promote educational excellence, expand the campus, and fully engage with various stakeholders in the community, UWT has assembled a cadre of services and provides an exemplary case for what and how an urban serving university delivers on its mission. The mission of an urban serving university extends from student recruitment, admission, tailored pedagogy, graduation, and career development to use-inspired/action research, community-centered education, real estate, and economic development. UWT is clearly recognized as the engine of change in the region. As the role of UWT in the community grows in scale, however, it is important that the university employs a more systematic and purposeful data collection protocol that will enable its internal and external constituents to understand the depth and magnitude of the university's impact on the lives of students and the region it serves.

In fact, UWT may not be alone. Many urban serving universities are highly active in their communities, and while they collect project- and student-related information, they may not systematically collect student-community engagement data.

As this brief case study suggests, the depth and breadth of the activities of an urban serving university such as UWT are not only impressive, but the magnitude of this university's efforts and impact needs to be documented and told in a systematic way. Therefore, a data collection protocol may be necessary. As an important part of this effort, an attempt should be made to help urban serving universities understand what constitutes important or minimally necessary information and how often this information needs to be updated.

As urban serving universities mature in their operation, more than two decades since their recognition within higher education, celebrating their achievement requires documented stories, as well as robust data to illustrate their continued and growing success in American cities.

APPENDIX 1

Interview Questions and Process

These key respondents were initially presented with a set of questions that were driven by the conceptual model presented earlier:

1. How do you define an "urban serving university"? Does this definition differ from how UWT functions as an urban serving university (USU)?

2. How does your role within UWT relate to its mission as a USU?

3. Do you have an articulated strategy that connects the activities of your office with our USU mission? If this is documented, can you share the materials?

4. Who are the key individuals in your office who play an active role in delivering the urban serving mission of your unit? What do they do? Do they document their work (frequency, time commitment, etc.)? Can you estimate what percentage of their time is dedicated to these dedicated tasks?

5. Please provide a list of projects and initiatives under which you deliver your urban serving mission. Please provide a brief description of each. If an initiative or a project has already been completed, please include it in the list and provide the related timeframe.

6. How do you measure the success of your urban serving projects/initiatives? Do you collect any qualitative or quantitative data related to your project? If yes, please list and describe what information you collect.

7. What resources, other than personnel time, do/did you dedicate to each urban serving project/initiative (i.e., special space, funding, etc.)? Please provide as much detail as possible.

8. Are students included in your efforts? How? Do you have any data (including quantifiable data) on this?

9. Who are your external constituents (organizations or individuals)? Do you interact with all of them equally? If not, please identify those that you would consider to be your primary collaborators. If you were to pick one group/person for us to interview, who would that be?

Following the completion of these surveys, each respondent was interviewed for about an hour to elaborate and refine the responses. This occasion was also used to identify important documents that could help shape a more systematic answer to the question, What do we do that makes us an urban serving university? These documents included economic impact studies, special reports (e.g., relationship with the military community in the Puget Sound region), data collected by individual offices regarding their activities, and communication pieces used for interaction with the public. The respondents were asked what data they collect systematically and how they would envision a data collection protocol for urban serving activities.

Additional Information Regarding Various Activities and Services at UWT

Student Services has also invested in particular staffing and programs to meet the needs of students. These include the following:

- **Pre-College Outreach Coordinator**—This person develops, implements, delivers, maintains, expands, evaluates, and revises high-quality educational programming for pre-college youth.

- **Math Science Leadership Programs**—This program encourages, motivates, and inspires students to succeed in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and develop the leadership and academic skills necessary to pursue a career in STEM fields.

- **Community Engagement Matching Scholarships**—This program is a collaborative effort between community-based organizations and UWT to enhance the financial capacity of smaller nonprofits to offer college scholarships. By enhancing the financial support offered through smaller, local nonprofits, UWT is working with its community to widen pathways to the promise of a bright future through a university education.

Once students arrive on campus, a number of activities focus on making sure that they succeed. These activities begin with the "pre-arrival phase of student orientation," which includes Admitted Student Day. This activity helps students function effectively within the university environment and understand services such as registration, university advisement, math placement, and financial aid. Additionally, special financial support mechanisms have been established to help students who are not eligible for financial aid or require supplemental funds. These include UW institutional grant, Chancellor's/Dammeier Endowed Fund to support LEAP and DREAMer students, and Chancellor's Opportunity Scholarship.

In addition to these programs, Student Services focuses on a number of other supportive services, including the following:

- Childcare Assistance Program orientation in collaboration with the Children's Museum of Tacoma and student recognized groups

- Childcare and Family Support Services

- Programs and support for veteran students

- Disability Support Services

- Advisement and consultation to underrepresented, low-income, at-risk students

Education and Academic Affairs[5]

For this brief case study, it is impossible to capture all that occurs within academic affairs. From established centers to individual faculty members

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5. For the purpose of this case study, a comprehensive list of courses and projects managed by individual faculty members is not included. However, urban serving universities should be encouraged to collect this information systematically.

and classrooms, a range of use-inspired research and pedagogy focuses on community engagement, infusing students with and creating a culture of community-centered learning. Various academic units undertake a range of activities that are designed to promote evidence-based, transformative investment in the urban setting. These units include institutionally supported centers, such as the Center for Responsibility and Leadership (discussed later), the Center for Big Data, and the Center for Strong Schools, and initiatives such the Tacoma Whole Child Initiative and the Institution-to-Institution internship program. These learning experiences are unique, featuring paid, year-long internships with a handful of prominent community partners, including the City of Tacoma and the United Way of Pierce County.

A forerunner to these initiatives was a yearlong program at the Museum of Glass, in which students served as curators of two installations at the museum.

- The link between such initiatives and the academic mission of the campus and the integration of such programs into academic units is another important criterion. The Board Governance course (Management 465 and 466) in the Milgard School of Business, for example, is a two-course sequence that introduces students to board membership and governance through an apprenticeship on a board. Each student is matched with a nonprofit organization where the student serves as an apprentice board member, with a regular board member serving as mentor.

- Some of the most significant engagement with the community comes from the classroom. For example, in one course in Urban Studies built around community engagement (TSUD 333: Assessment and Evaluation of Urban Sustainability), a faculty member partnered with a community and land use planner at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to engage students in applied research that resulted in a report that was co-authored with three students. Another faculty member in interdisciplinary arts and sciences developed a course focused on service learning (T WOMN 250: Feminism and Service Learning), in which students worked

in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Tacoma to develop the curriculum for a "Girls View" program that covers topics such as race and gender messages in music videos, race and gender in the social construction of beauty, and female athletes. These are just two examples out of many that integrate community engagement into UWT's curriculum.

- Grant funding provides another common foundation for such initiatives. The Green Partnership Fund, for example, created a service-learning project at the First Creek watershed and First Creek Middle School in Tacoma. The program focused on watershed restoration at First Creak integrated with a range of educational components at First Creek Middle School, which borders the watershed. One feature of this program has been student visits to UWT to understand the scientific process as it relates to the testing of water quality in First Creek, while another has been the publication of education modules that outline both the teacher/adult facilitator role and student activities related to such projects. This connection between community engagement and academic scholarship in different forms is important for UWT and its community-centered educational environment.

Other initiatives are more grassroots, building on a single idea without formal institutional support. For example, the UW Tacoma Theater Project, which presents theater productions in a video studio on campus, evolved from a conversation in a creative writing class that revealed that most of the students in the class had never seen a professionally staged play. This project brings together a range of community groups, including people from other academic institutions, to create a unique theater experience. While Tacoma has more formal spaces, including a range of facilities at the Broadway Center, a small, black box theater was not one of them until the development of this project, and was identified as a community need. The UW Tacoma Theater also connects to scholarship, as the faculty member in charge has presented at conferences and has published papers on this project.

Case Highlight: Meeting the Needs of the Military Community

The university is committed to serving the military base, particularly those people transitioning to civilian life. The half-time position of special assistant to the chancellor for community engagement is almost entirely dedicated to this service, as is another half-time staff position. In a September 2012 presentation to the university advisory board, the range of activities and initiatives were identified. These included recruitment, advising, programmatic design, and creating a military-friendly culture on campus. For example, the Master in Cybersecurity and Leadership degree was particularly designed with the transitioning military personnel in mind.

Furthermore, UWT participates with the Washington Military Transition Council, a broad-based community effort, to align the organizations working to support transition and military, veterans, and their families in general. This work has involved piloting a campus visit program for service members, and helping integrate an advisor into the Army Career and Alumni Program office.

The director of external relations and the special assistant to the chancellor for community engagement serve as coordinators between the university and JBLM, which has led to collaborations around best practices, such as collaborations between UWT and the base around issues of prevention and dealing with sexual assault. The university and JBLM helped establish an Army War College Asia-Pacific Fellowship and coordinated a series of public events in collaboration with I Corps that promote cross-sector discussions about a series of topics. At present, the collaborative conversations are primarily on two topics: leadership, with an emphasis on learning about similarities between business and military, and rebalancing U.S.-military activities surrounding base closings in the Asia-Pacific region. Both conversations build connections between civilians and the military, which is important to military leaders.

Through a collaborative process, UWT has developed a well-established and mutually beneficial relationship with the base that has expanded from educational to career services. Only a handful of universities in the United States have such an extended connection with a military base, making UWT an important example of what it means to be a veteran- and military-friendly campus.

A 2014 publication of the University of Washington, entitled *Assessing Veterans Services and Programs,* highlights the important role played by UWT. This report, which covers all activities throughout all three UW campuses (Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma), acknowledges that UWT is the main connection the university system has with the military base. This report suggests that "UW Tacoma has fostered a strong relationship with Joint Base Lewis–McChord (JBLM). This evolving partnership has exposed many active duty military personnel to the UW system, benefiting both UW Tacoma and the military. Beyond the UW Tacoma–JBLM partnership, there are only a few examples of UW service on other military bases across the state."[6]

Case Highlight: Center for Leadership and Social Responsibility

An important aspect of engagement with community groups and linking with the world of practice is the creation of professional networks for a student body that lacks such a valuable resource. While universities typically have career centers and conduct career days and other activities to expose students to various professional opportunities, UWT has chosen to approach this topic more intentionally. In additional to formal internship programs, UWT has invested in centers such as the Center for Leadership and Social Responsibility. This center aims "to develop socially responsible leaders who build sustainable organizations and communities," and to achieve the following goals:

- Build connections between stakeholders for mutual benefit

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6. University of Washington. 2014. *Assessing Veterans Services And Programs,* p. 2.

- Extend knowledge of corporate leadership and social responsibility across business disciplines and beyond

- Promote understanding of a broad range of topics such as leadership, social responsibility, corporate governance, corporate citizenship, ethics, and sustainability

Simply described, this center connects students and faculty members with external communities, particularly the private sector. This connection helps students to build a professional network that will allow them to succeed in their career development after their graduation. Students can build their professional network through activities such as professionally organized competitions, the Freshman Leadership Seminar, annual business conferences, curriculum development grants for interested faculty members, and community engagement grants.

UWT's Key Partners

- Puget Sound Partnership (recommended)
- City of Tacoma
- Port of Tacoma
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Stormwater Equipment Manufacturers Association

- Economic Development Board
- JBLM
- JBLM Educational Leadership
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Pierce County
- Milgard Family and the Milgard Family Foundation
- YMCA
- Children's Museum of Tacoma
- United Way
- Tacoma School District, including high school principals, counselors and pre-college outreach program
- Community Colleges' leadership
- Mortenson Construction
- USO Center for Innovation
- Asia Pacific Cultural Center—build relationship to develop partnership and collaboration on future programs and services
- Filipino Community Alliance—build relationship to develop partnership and collaboration on future programs and services

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