Working Together: A Values Approach for Strengthening University/Community Partnerships
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER

PROGRAM STATEMENT PARKING

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PROPOSED PARKING

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NORTHEAST PERSPECTIVE
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR CEC AT UNO

• UNO as Nebraska’s metropolitan university
  • Community engagement integral to vision, mission, and strategic goals
  • Interaction/Interdependence with community intrinsic to campus history and culture
• UNO as one of the original Carnegie Engaged Universities
Since late 1990s explosive growth in campus engagement activities

- Academic Service Learning
- Service Days
- American Democracy Project
- Exploring Scholarship of Engagement
- P-16 Initiative (Building Bright Futures)
- Summer Works
- Student Organizations and Leadership Programs
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR CEC AT UNO

UNO and Community Partnerships
College of Public Affairs & Community Service
Collaborating Center
  Neighborhood Center
  Nonprofit Incubator @ Collaborating Center
Brennan Labor Institute
Omaha by Design (located on UNO campus)
Building Bright Futures
Values Identification process

- Involved university and community in initial visioning and design forums
  - Feedback shaped initial design, function, priorities of building

- Established a CEC Building Advisory Board
  - Composed of university and community representatives
  - Played key role in identifying and affirming building values through “facilitated conversations”
  - Now determining process to identify and select residents of building, based on these values
Values of the UNO Community Engagement Center

- Collaboration
- Dynamic culture fostering camaraderie and communication
- Community and university partners will be able to communicate authentic and clear needs/benefits of using space
- Users of space will be reflective of community’s diversity from racial, ethnic, economic and geographic perspectives
- Commitment to “respectful reciprocity”
- Willingness to work with and showcase outcomes and efforts of faculty, volunteers, and/or organizations
Operationalizing CEC Values

- Occupancy RFP, decision criteria
- Planning to ensure campus interactions (e.g., student leadership programs, service learning, community service activities) reflect these values
- Website/information sharing
- Priority setting
- Creating a community culture: building self-management, resident expectations
CEC Management

- Will be overseen by Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
- Not under any specific college; all colleges as well as Student Affairs, Athletics, and other university offices encouraged to be involved
- Not an effort to centralize outreach or limit outreach to the UNO campus; rather it is designed to strengthen campus capacity to broaden its outreach throughout community while making campus and its resources more accessible
- A small management team for the center will be created
- There will be several campus/building oversight committees in place before/after building opens
Types of Users of the Engagement Center

*Permanent University Users*: University organizations focused on engagement and outreach, i.e., Service Learning Academy, Volunteer Service, new student/community leadership programs, Brennan Labor Institute.

*Community or University Residents*: Longer-term (but not necessarily permanent) organizations and initiatives. Will be located in the community/university partner spaces throughout the building. Will seek a mix of community and university users. Will require participation in application process.
Types of Users of the Engagement Center

**Short Term Users:** Ranging from a few months to perhaps one or two years, could be collaborative grant partnerships, community/university initiatives, student-driven projects, teams of faculty working on small-scope community research or outreach projects. Will require simple application.

**Day/Week Users:** For intensive student, faculty and/or community projects, i.e., classroom projects, student organizations service projects, service learning activities. May involve reserving a room or project area, but no application will be required.
Application Process

Will be using a values-based application process to select all short-term and long term users (community and university) conducted by CEC Building Advisory Committee (university and community representatives)

Different applications for each type of user

• Will be relatively simple
• Will focus on how applicant meets CEC values
• Selection process will begin shortly after groundbreaking (October 24), then rolling deadlines
• Will include some type of interview
• Final decision is SVCASA and/or Chancellor
Still a work in progress

Community partners will pay some form of rent that will be affordable yet competitive with local rates

• Rent will include amenities such as access to university services, IT, CEC resources, limited garage parking, security, all furniture, utilities

• Agreements will delineate expectations of active engagement with university

• Rent will help underwrite a portion of the operating expenses of the building

University partners will not pay rent but will be asked to demonstrate reciprocal relationships with community partners
• Flexible environment allowing for reconfiguration as needs change
• Many common, shared, and meeting spaces to promote collaboration and meeting space for and between the community and university
• Technology, furniture and room design that support collaborative use
• Ease of access for community partners, campus visitors and staff by location and parking
• Designed to entice and encourage student involvement, service and community engagement
Other CEC Resources

- Extensive meeting rooms serving 5 – 300
- Three separate community/university partner spaces
- Community dialogue room
- Satellite meeting rooms, formal board room
- Planning spaces with flexible uses/layouts
- Student lounge/project rooms
- Areas for documentary screenings (indoor and outdoor)
- Digital art wall for student displays
- Running feeds of volunteer opportunities
- Coordinated and networked community service/volunteer/service learning information
Campus and Community Impact

- Expand and enhance campus community engagement
- Increase campus/community collaboration
- Develop community nonprofit capacity
- Enhance graduates’ capacity and commitment to civic participation
- Symbolize UNO’s commitment to the metropolitan community
2ND LEVEL @ COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ROOMS
John Christensen, Chancellor

B. J. Reed, Sr. Vice Chancellor Academic & Student Affairs

Deborah Smith-Howell, Associate Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs & Dean, Graduate Studies

Sara Woods, Associate Dean, College of Public Affairs & Community Service