

July, 2002

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Campus Directions Committee task force on Community Partnerships is to examine ways that Indiana University South Bend can develop and expand partnerships with the community. That includes strengthening existing partnerships as well as creating new partnerships with schools, business and labor, government agencies, and other external groups. The task force began its work by auditing current partnerships, and is continuing by recommending new ones. That will involve bringing together a number of focus groups over the next year.

The task force created three categories of partnerships: institutional, programmatic, and individual. University-sponsored programs such as the Office of Community Links, UCET, and Alumni Affairs are examples of institutional programs that support partnerships but are unconnected to specific academic units. The programmatic category includes academic schools, colleges, and divisions, which sponsor numerous internship programs and service-learning activities. Individual activities include applied faculty research as well as service on community boards and committees. Our audit shows that IU South Bend engages in an extraordinary variety of community partnerships at all levels.

However, major challenges include time and pressures on faculty teaching loads and a lack of common understanding across the campus of the concepts and models of service-learning. Policies will need to be developed to reward faculty, particularly those related to faculty tenure based on service in addition to research. We will need to determine how such institutional programs as the Office of Community Links and UCET can educate the campus and

promote service-learning. We will need to continue to examine each programmatic area, on an on-going basis, to evaluate partnerships. We will also need to continue to track and encourage individual involvement to maximize those connections. Further, we will need to determine how service-learning can be better incorporated into student learning and student life. We will need to develop ways to better publicize our partnerships in order to encourage such activities and improve the position of IU South Bend as a community leader.

In tracking and evaluating our partnerships and community needs, the purpose is to identify gaps and facilitate the creation of new partnerships. The ultimate goal is to bring together the resources of our campus and our community for mutually beneficial purposes.