May 22, 2020

Co-chairs: V. Kaye Monk-Morgan & Scott Wituk PH. D

Wichita State University

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Engagement & Regional Prosperity

Taskforce Report

# Taskforce Charter:

The purpose of the Engagement and Regional Prosperity Taskforce is to develop an inventory and gap analysis of WSU programs and create an initial set of recommendations to coordinate efforts and address gaps more effectively**.**

In order to achieve the above purpose, 25 WSU faculty, staff, students and WSU community partners were identified to serve on the Taskforce (Taskforce Members listed in Appendix A). Kaye Monk Morgan and Scott Wituk were identified as Taskforce Chairs with the responsibility of guiding the Taskforce through several months of review and discussions leading to the set of draft recommendations listed below. From February 2020 to May 2020, the Taskforce:

* Identified current WSU departments, centers, projects, and other recent activities and documents related to engagement and regional prosperity
* Discussed strengths and challenges of WSU’s recent and current efforts related to engagement and regional prosperity
* Learned from national organizations (ACLU, Carnegie), other universities (ECU, Stanford) regarding their approach to engagement and prosperity
* Identified what engagement and regional prosperity could look like at WSU (Hopes and Aspirations)

With the above steps in mind, recommendations are presented below in the following order:

* Recommendations for WSU Division or Office Structure
* Recommendations for WSU Organizational Supports
* Recommendations for WSU Actions

The Taskforce recognizes that for optimal impact the recommended actions will need an accompanying cultural shift on campus. Units currently working in this space should be partners in co-creating the vision for broader engagement and regional prosperity to solidify not just buy-in, but ownership.

# Recommendations:

## WSU Division or Office Structure

1. **In order to expand and elevate WSU’s contribution to the local community, region, state, and beyond, establish a WSU division or office and senior level administrator focused on coordinating and supporting the implementation of community engagement and prosperity activities and efforts.** Based on examination of other institutions, the office could initially be small (approx. 3-5) and report directly to the WSU President. One purpose would be to serve as a hub connecting WSU departments, faculty, centers, staff, and administrative offices to engagement and prosperity topics, issues, and opportunities. Secondly, it would serve as one of the primary mechanisms at WSU to connect with diverse organizations, groups, businesses, nonprofits, government, and others. Through these purposes it would strengthen and expand partnerships, helping enhance WSU’s commitment to be a driver of education, the economy, culture, and health.

## WSU Organizational Supports

1. **In order to support the exchange of ideas and opportunities to help address community and organization needs, create an Engagement & Prosperity Committee that includes selected WSU faculty and staff and identified alumni and community members.** The committee will (1) discuss new opportunities, (2) help establish the long-term vision and plans for the WSU office, (3) provide guidance and support on current and upcoming WSU activities, (4) further refine engagement definition and measurement, (5) connect to national resources and other universities to continue learning, (6) examine tenure and promotion policies and procedures so that engagement efforts are more widely recognized and incentivized, and (7) serve as ambassadors for engagement at WSU and community creating multiple entry points for engagement.
2. **In order to create internal consistencies, explore aligning contract and grant centers into one high-functioning unit.** Consider options that can support meeting community needs, while also generating additional collaboration across WSU, as well as efficiencies in administration, operations, and budgeting.

## WSU Action Items

1. **In order to further develop relationships, identify community and organization needs to help support the establishment of new community – WSU partnerships.** These partnerships could take many forms, including but not limited to new research opportunities, applied and serving learning, student internships/practicums, artistic and creative connections, new forms of learning, mentoring, and alumni engagement. The recommendations below provide additional ways in which the office will develop and serve as an internal hub to help meet community and organization needs.
2. **In order to continue to understand the diverse strengths, activities, and resources across WSU, partner with the Strategic Planning Committee to develop and maintain an inventory of community engagement activities at WSU and WSU-Tech.** The inventory will help identify key faculty, staff, departments, programs, and student organizations that engage in service learning, community service, engagement, and help contribute to economic development and prosperity.
3. **In order to raise student involvement, support existing and create new pipelines between WSU and local businesses, nonprofits, and government.** Through existing or new pipelines create 20 scholarship-based student engagement fellowships that provide additional opportunities for students to work closely with WSU faculty, staff, departments, and centers involved in engagement, prosperity, and economic development activities. Explore the development of minor, certificate, or other forms of learning. Finally, encourage all WSU students’ participation in engagement, volunteerism, service learning, etc.
4. **In order to recognize and support WSU faculty and staff, design and implement an Engagement Academy where participants connect with local leaders, collaborate with each other, and identify ways to meet community needs.** The Engagement Academy’s purpose, structure, program agenda, selection process, and other details will be further developed by the office, along with support from the Engagement and Prosperity Committee.
5. I**n order to create additional exposure, support or create four yearly benchmark activities that focus on engagement and economic development efforts.** Benchmark activities will help highlight WSU faculty, staff, departments, centers and alumni efforts to engage the local community, region, state, and beyond (Ex. Regional Economic Conference, Public Service Week, etc). In addition, use existing and establish new identified strategic communication efforts to highlight the efforts of WSU faculty, staff, departments, centers and alumni.

# Background of the Issue (Why Important to WSU)

While not exhaustive, several factors contribute to why engagement and prosperity is important to WSU.

First, WSU is one of the anchor institutions in South Central Kansas that can help overcome economic disparities, health disparities, educational disparities, and help stop the outward migration of millennials.

Second, while many departments, centers, and projects show that WSU has a strong background in engagement and prosperity, they have not always been coordinated or recognized. In addition, faculty and staff have not always seen engagement and prosperity as “part of their work” or been incentivized or rewarded.

Third, nationally there is growing recognition about the role of higher education institutions in engagement and prosperity. Over the past two decades a growing number of universities have focused their attention on such issues, helping address local, regional, and statewide issues, while also helping create new funding streams for such activities.

* Fourth, students are recognizing and demanding that their college experiences include opportunities that reach beyond the classroom. Many are interested in community, civic, or other related opportunities. Such opportunities prepare students to be more competitive for jobs and careers, while also being well-rounded citizens. Taskforce members identified WSU departments, centers, events, and activities related to engagement and regional prosperity. While not exhaustive, the list represents the most comprehensive description for WSU. The list is included in Appendix B.
* In addition, the Taskforce members recognized several other recent or current efforts that have some relation to engagement and regional prosperity, including the Activation Team from Strategic Planning and the ACLU “Innovation & Economic Prosperity” self-study.

# Current Status of WSU (Activities, Strengths, Weaknesses)

## Activities

## Strengths

* Great momentum in multiple areas of WSU. Now is the time to capitalize.
* Currently doing well in retail, innovation, housing, and research.
* Several examples of centers, departments, institutes with community connections and engagement experience.
* WSU continues to create a national profile with the growth of Innovation Campus.
* There are several pipelines of students into various industries and companies.

### Weaknesses

* Community doesn’t always think of WSU as a partner. How do we make WSU a default?
* There is some fragmentation of efforts. Good stuff happening, but don’t know where/what is happening.
* Diminish possible confusion related to which office I should contact.
* People think there is a “shock fence” around the campus. Need to correct that.
* How does campus parking impact community engagement? Are folks allowed or welcomed?
* Could be a way to limit the “siloed” living of some of our efforts
* Counted nine institutes currently at Wichita State that work with outside focused work; are they all doing something different or was there a second one built to fill a gap from the first one; do we streamline what we have to increase resources.

# Insights from Others (Other Universities, Associations, Community)

* East Carolina University recognized the need to have those in high authority positions support engagement efforts. Faculty need to be incentivized and supported, including building into the T&P process and a faculty development program with connection to research and grants. The Carnegie assessment process is helpful to complete as it creates conversations at the university related to questions posed. APLU membership is helpful as an opportunity learn from peer institutions. Started in 2006 and still refining/developing - takes commitment.
* The Stanford web news noted an affordability task force that was undertaking the differing needs of communities in their area. (<https://news.stanford.edu/2019/05/20/affordability-task-force-digging-needs-various-communities/>).
* The James Madison website defines community engagement and lists stakeholders and a collection of activities.
* Centennial Campus <https://centennial.ncsu.edu/centennial/partners.php> shares the “Strong Partnerships,” the campus life and business industry along with the maturity of the campus.
* Additional insights from these and others...
  + Increase the connection with small businesses and increase opportunities with non-profits.
  + Multiple disciplines involved.
  + Centralized structure to support and elevate the work.
  + Outreach efforts to community.
  + Clear place to go.
  + One gets a strong sense of “who they are” and what is important to them.

# Hopes/Aspirations for WSU

## Connector/Awareness Builder - Internally

* Bring together multiple departments, faculty, centers with community needs and interests. Some place to work beyond the traditional academic silos. Someone/something that can facilitate the connections and help launch. A developer, builder, including creating new opportunities for students throughout the community.
* Bring faculty, staff, centers together with an awareness of those who “does this type of work”.
* Staff, faculty, centers, departments working together in a coordinated way on signature or identified areas that are important to southcentral Kansas.
* Someone/entity who can coordinate partnership efforts and lead the charge.
* Build on current resources and relationships (including staff, students and current campus partners).
* Establish connections with groups focused on similar issues.
* Enhance the engagement of athletics.

## Connector/Awareness Builder – Externally (General)

* Create and elevate the relationship(s) with the chambers, local school districts, business, health organizations, and others.
* Greater awareness by the community of these types of efforts. Additional branding, highlighting, and elevating this work.
* Clear point of entry or one that can coordinate or connect with others across university.
* Finding out the needs, disparities, creating recommendations, and pulling together those who want to make an impact.
* Increase university presence at community events (State fair, Riverfest, OpenStreets)
* Determine which areas/issues in the community we would like to address/impact.
* Get the story out. Recognize and Celebrate.
* Work with the community to make sure that we have the industries needed.
* Hearing all voices, having an inclusive space. Making sure WSU is in all areas, try to create those experiences on campus.
* Explaining the resources that are available to community members, resources that are outward facing that don’t only focus on students.
* Linking the goals and missions of stakeholder organizations and using resources to accomplish more.

## Connector/Awareness Builder – Externally (Emphasis on Alumni & Friends)

* Increase utilization of alumni and their philanthropy in ways that are meant to improve the disparities. We are capturing their giving to WSU, but not other causes.
* Maximize the relationships with alumni. How do we bring them back onto campus to help bolster their businesses and create a line of mentoring for students to see what the alumni have done and that they can do it too?
* Make sure we include ‘friends of WSU’ not just alumni (example Evergy).
* Celebrate WSU’s strong alumni relationships. Improve those relationships with alumni that can help with the work in the community to improve the disparity so that they too have an opportunity to give back.
* Acknowledge those alumni who have helped within the academic setting, with applied learning experiences for students. It's great that we’re centralizing all the information so that we can even do more and there's no overlap.

WSU-Policy/Procedure/Culture of Support

* Supporting faculty who want to do engagement and prosperity type-work. Create the structure by which faculty can be incentivized, rewarded, acknowledged for this type of work. This work is “messy”. Faculty need time, encouragement, and support to do it.
* Initiate a culture change and stay the course.
* Building culture connecting shift space, adding First Friday.
* Change mindset - Not here to help, rather we’d like partner on your goals.

## Student Focused & Support

* Research and develop additional pipelines for students.
* Define the quality of life on campus. How does Innovation campus integrate into the WSU community and vice-versa?
* Move forward with the mindset of strategic enrollment management with the goals of community engagement & prosperity.
* Include students in the engagement work to allow students to see other things going on in south central KS that might help them want to stay.
* Make the case for the benefits, why is this important for students. What do they gain?

## Promote Use of WSU’s Physical Space

* Economic Impact - Bringing vendors to campus (Braeburn Square, RSC, Farmer’s market, Biz Fest, Buy Black ICT, Empowered Women’s Event, Shop Small Events, Career Fairs).
* Allowing spaces for community to come to campus.

Definition/Development of Idea

* Define the WSU continuum of engagement (graphic).
* Adopt some shared language that captures the desire for collective impact.
* Identifying what the university believes are great examples of community engagement. Perform an autopsy/diagnosis the success to extrapolate what went well.
* Creating metrics for engagement.
* Basic data gathering, such as:
  + Students remaining in Wichita (Human Capital, talent attraction to develop Wichita and WSU). Create markets for alumni who are vendors, keep connected.
  + # of non-WSU people who come to campus.
  + Economic impact study.

# Structure/Office

* Collective point will require culture shift and increased awareness and expectations.
* Create structure that limits bureaucracy and supports innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. Promote connections without having to go through the hub.
* Devote an office to expand current efforts to region.
* Technical fix is to create an office, but what is the adaptive piece? Just creating an office won’t solve the problem.

# List of Taskforce Members

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| **Name** | **Representing** |
| [**Kaye Monk-Morgan**](mailto:kaye.monk@wichita.edu?subject=Task%20Force%20Inquiry), co-chair | Academic Affairs |
| [**Scott Wituk**](mailto:scott.wituk@wichita.edu?subject=Task%20Force%20Inquiry), co-chair | Community Engagement Institute |
| Kimberly Engber | Academic Affairs |
| Troy Bruun | Finance and Administration |
| Alicia Sanchez | Student Affairs |
| Tracee Friess | Research-Innovation |
| Lynn Deckinger | Foundation |
| Andy Schlapp | Office of the President |
| Brent Kemnitz | Athletics |
| Courtney Sendall | WSU Tech |
| Gayle Goetz | WSU Tech |
| Carmen Hytche | Strategic Communications |
| Stacia Boden | General Counsel |
| Kevin Harrison | Diversity |
| Lashonda Garnes | Diversity |
| Aleksander Sternfeld-Dunn | Faculty Senate |
| Shaunna Millar | Faculty Senate |
| Connie Basquez | USS Senate |
| Matt Houston | USS Senate |
| Tyler Gegen | UP Senate |
| Cindy Carnahan | Outside Representative |
| Ann Fox | Outside Representative |
| Bill West | Outside Representative |
| Mackenzie Haas | Student |
| Kevin Dao | Student |

# Appendix A

Wichita State University Engagement Inventory as of 5-8-2020