

This article describes the results of a survey conducted by the Office of Urban and Metropolitan Programs, jointly established by AASCU and NASULGC. The survey obtained information regarding community service activities and pertinent conditions from 186 of the 280 member institutions that identify themselves as either "urban" or "metropolitan." The results indicate substantial community service at almost all of the institutions, identify principal areas of activity, as well as barriers to meeting this aspect of institutional mission, and suggest strategies to leverage resources and expand service capability.

Community Service At Urban Public Institutions:

A Report on Conditions and Activities

Introduction

In 1993, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) established an Office of Urban and Metropolitan Programs to represent their members' interests in Washington and to support them in fulfilling their special role in the urban/metropolitan environment. In Spring 1994, the office conducted a survey of approximately 280 member institutions which had identified themselves as either "urban" or "metropolitan." The purposes of the survey, *Urban Community Service at AASCU and NASULGC Institutions*, were to:

- gather descriptive information about the institutions, their environments and constituents, and how they served them;
- assess members' commitment to and involvement in community service activities;
- identify conditions institutions judged to be a hindrance to effective community service;

- find good examples of university-community cooperation and learn how it was fostered;
- identify member needs that the associations could address through new/modified services.

From the data gathered, the associations planned to develop or adjust their programs and services to suit their members' needs and to support their mission-related endeavors.

Survey Findings

Of the 280 institutions solicited, 186 (67 percent) responded to the survey. Among the respondents, 107 were AASCU institutions, 50 were NASULGC institutions, and 29 were members of both associations. In 1992, AASCU and NASULGC adopted a dual membership agreement which assigned an institution's primary membership based on its 1994 Carnegie classification. NASULGC members are research universities I and II and doctoral universities I. AASCU members are doctoral universities I, master's universities and colleges I and II, and baccalaureate colleges I and II. An institution holding membership in its primary association may petition the other for membership. This resulted in 39 new dual members, drawn primarily from urban- and metropolitan-serving institutions. Twenty-seven institutions or state systems of higher education, including 8 historically black colleges and universities, held joint membership prior to 1992.

Institutional Mission

The literature notes that urban-serving institutions have begun to develop mission statements that acknowledge their "moral duties" and convey a sense of responsibility toward the community. One might expect university-sponsored service activities on behalf of the community to be predicated on similar criteria. However, only 12 percent of respondents reported that their institutions have formal criteria governing the conditions under which they undertake a community service project. The remainder pointed to underlying principles consistent with the mission: e.g., the service be related to learning.

Some institutions submitted documents describing formal institution-wide criteria. Metropolitan State College of Denver's booklet describing its partnership, linkage and collaborative efforts notes its commitment to a 1990 statement by metropolitan university presidents:

... professional service must include: development of creative partnerships with public and private enterprises that ensure that the intellectual resources of our institutions are fully engaged with such enterprises in mutually beneficial ways; [and] close working relationships with the elementary and secondary schools of our metropolitan regions, aimed at maximizing the effectiveness of the entire metropolitan education system, from preschool through post-doctoral levels. . . .

Morgan State University's mission as an urban university entails providing:

... service for the citizens of the state, with a special emphasis on meeting the needs of the culturally diverse and multi-racial populations found in urban centers at the local, regional, state and national levels. . . .

Morgan State has established an Institute for Urban Research which includes a Community Development Resource Center to coordinate campus programs across major areas of activity.

Although many university departments may interact with the same external agency, such as the public schools, criteria governing these engagements are often established separately, on a case-by-case basis. As a result, the programs, their sources of funding, their duration, their target populations, their mixes of interactions, and their quality may vary widely, all within the same institution. For example, Temple University recently inventoried its numerous mission-related academic activities occurring outside the classroom and reported: "It is difficult to separate community and public service from internships, student teaching, and public school activities." The College of Allied Health Professions adopted a nearby elementary school where its students support Health Fair, Career Day, and student visits to college classes; individual faculty in teaching assist the Philadelphia school district in rewriting the K-12 physical education curriculum; the Esther Boyer College of Music offers a Community Music Program with tuition-free music instruction to 200 young people.

Service-learning and other forms of student involvement have become an important part of "community service" in many colleges and universities. In this area there is also a general lack of formal criteria. As one institution

reported, "the closest thing to a consensual criterion is to determine the educational value of the proposed service project for our students, faculty and staff." Thus, while consistency with mission is important, it is almost understood. It is more important to make the institution's commitment to the student explicit, while meeting community needs. Agreements with a partner agency must incorporate the idea expressed at one campus:

... for students to get credit there must be an agreement in place with the agency re: the service-learning goals and the responsibilities of the partners; we are trying to meet human needs while emphasizing student learning; the undertaking of service projects depends on faculty willingness to incorporate a service option within an existing course.

Service Areas and Modes of Delivery

All respondents reported that they are involved in activities related to the welfare or public service needs of their primary communities; one quarter occasionally, and three-quarters systematically. Over half report they respond to a particular region of the state, and 39 percent identify the *local area* as their service area. Institutions report serving both local and regional areas at the same time.

- The *local area* usually refers to population defined by a governance structure: county or city. Other examples range from the 10,000 people living near the University of South Dakota, to the three million people comprising the Atlanta metro area near Kennesaw State College.
- *Regional service areas* varied: the University of Southern Maine, one-half of the state; Armstrong State College, 18 counties; West Virginia State College, a 12-county area of urban and rural environments; Northeastern Louisiana University, the lower Mississippi Delta Economic Development District.
- Institutions located near an international border find service opportunities beyond national boundaries. For example, the University of Arizona reports its area to include Arizona and the Mexican State of Sonora while the University of Texas at El Paso reports serving far west Texas, Northern Mexico, and Southern New Mexico.

It would be interesting to learn how these areas were identified initially and how they evolved.

For the purpose of service delivery, nearly 87 percent of respondents have one or more special purpose institutes, centers or offices. At the remaining institutions, there appears to be little or no coordination of individual activities which may be spread across the institution. The activities of these centers and individuals add up to hundreds of collaborative efforts to improve educational opportunity, social welfare, and quality of life for millions of people.

Identifying Community Service Priorities

To learn constituents' and institutions' community service priorities and how campuses were addressing them, the survey listed 16 areas of concern: education, economic development, cultural enrichment, health/human services, community development, environment, labor force training, employment, government operation/decision making, law enforcement, conflict resolution, housing, energy, transportation, consumer affairs, and labor relations. Respondents were asked to indicate which were initially identified by the community, which were identified by campus needs analysis, and which were being addressed via institutional programming.

The areas identified as priorities by communities and by institutions vary only slightly, although there was some difference in relative emphases. From the communities' perspective, the top five priorities were education (61 percent), economic development (61 percent), community development (55 percent), health/human services (52 percent), and environment (44 percent). Institutional needs-analyses identified the top five as education (51 percent), health/human services (38 percent), cultural enrichment (37 percent), economic development (36 percent), and environment (34 percent). The actual number of institutions reporting community service activities follows: education, (86 percent); economic development, (76 percent); cultural enrichment, (73 percent); health/human services, (68 percent); and environment, (60 percent). Many institutions said they were addressing all 16 areas.

Demands for and Barriers to Service

The assumptions that the problems of urban centers are growing and that institutions are being called upon to increase their community service are borne out by survey feedback: 85 percent of respondents consider demands

on their institutions for community service to be greater now than five years ago. When asked about barriers to effective community service (Table 1), respondents dismissed the difficulties posed by the structure and the cooperation necessary for collaboration with city officials, school officials, and business and industry and indicated that the commitment of university leaders or trustees was also not a problem. Instead, they pinpointed faculty support conditions as the chief barrier to meeting a community service mission. Respondents identified as *significant barriers* the lack of resources or time for faculty to get involved to the extent necessary to solve problems (42 percent), and the lack of recognition accorded community service as a scholarly activity (27 percent). Another 48 percent said faculty time was *somewhat of a barrier*, while 45 percent identified the lack of recognition similarly. Other conditions considered to be *somewhat of a barrier* were lack of organization of various community service activities within the institution (56 percent) and internal disagreement about priorities for service (48 percent).

Table 1.
Barriers to Meeting the Community Service Mission*

	% Not	% Somewhat	% Significant
Disagreement about service priorities within the institution	48	48	5
Lack of commitment of university leaders/trustees	83	15	2
Lack of organization within institution of various community service activities	36	56	8
Lack of student volunteers to participate in appropriate activities	54	41	5
Lack of resources/time for faculty to get involved to the extent necessary to solve problems	10	48	47
Lack of recognition of community service for faculty as a scholarly activity	29	45	27
Lack of cooperative relationship between university and city officials	82	17	1
Lack of cooperative relationship between university and school officials	90	10	0
Lack of cooperative relationship with business/industry	87	12	1

*Responses were not mutually exclusive, therefore percentages by column do not total 100.

Queried about how they had reduced barriers and enhanced institutional effectiveness in community service, campuses pursued the strategies reflected in Table 2 as well as others noted below.

Table 2.
Steps to Increase Institutional Effectiveness in Community Service*

	Percent Taking Step
Greater emphasis on community service in the mission of the institution	65
Greater commitment by top institutional leaders to community service action	65
Clearer institutional goals for community service activities	56
Enhanced communications with service audience	53
Better information about the needs for community service programs in the institution's service area	44
Better allocation of resources for community service activities	32
Better integration of faculty professional service with institution's teaching/research functions	32
More effective incentive system to encourage faculty/staff commitment to community service	23

*Responses were not mutually exclusive, therefore percentages by column do not total 100.

Institutions have made the most of their connections to community agencies, schools, and business to leverage resources and expand service capability. They have also taken steps to strengthen internal structures, often by reorganization. To meet increased demands for assistance, institutions reported developing specific strategies or approaches that may be of interest to others.

Gaining Administrative Commitment. Strategies for gaining/showing administrative commitment to community services ranged from creating new senior positions or highly-visible advisory committees to integrating this theme into the institutional agenda. For example, the University of Akron created a vice presidency to provide assistance in solving community problems; Weber State University created a Vice President of Community Partnerships; and Western Connecticut State University made service the responsibility of the Vice President for Public Relations. The University of Alabama at Huntsville

used planning and priority analysis to handle multiple requests for assistance; the California State University, Hayward developed a community service advisory committee to plan a comprehensive program; and the College Collaborative Committee at William Patterson College of New Jersey catalogs and publicizes collaborative activities and directs community requests. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte reorganized outreach units and enhanced staffing, and Montana State University studied its outreach activities and hired a Dean of Outreach for Extension and Extended Studies.

Establishing Public Service Centers. Many institutions have set up centers to channel requests and thereby facilitate access to their resources and improve service to constituents. The SUNY College at Geneseo, the University of Hawaii, North Carolina Central University, and Weber State University all reported forming such centers. The University of West Florida created a Center for Learning through Organized Volunteer Experiences; the SUNY College at Oswego established a dedicated extension site accessible to population centers; and Virginia Polytechnic and State University created an umbrella office for five institutes and a center called University Outreach and International Programs.

Encouraging Potential Partners and Initiating Cooperative Endeavors. Campuses have found many ways to encourage partnerships and initiate cooperative ventures. Norfolk State University formed a community development corporation to create a stronger partnership with community leaders. The University of Alabama at Birmingham has "adopted" an adjacent community. California State University Los Angeles has sought collaborative strategies with different levels of government, community groups and funding agencies; and Northeast Louisiana University expanded its Strategic Planning Group to include representatives from off-campus community service organizations.

Encouraging Increased Student Participation. Respondents indicated a high level of participation in the National Corporation for Community Service grants competition. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was a founding member of the Illinois Campus Compact for Community Service. Other strategies which would enable the institutions to increase student involvement: Florida State University developed new structures for the involvement of students in service; Morgan State University established training resources for faculty, staff, and students. Richard Stockton State College introduced ULTRA, a program to promote, document, and reward commu-

nity service as an extracurricular activity. Michigan State University increased student internships and service-learning classes. Ramapo College of New Jersey developed an institutional service learning program for student volunteers as part of their course work. Washington State University integrated service learning into seven academic courses and placed 380 student volunteers in 40 community agencies and projects.

Encouraging Increased Faculty Participation. The University of Central Florida, Florida State University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago developed programs to increase faculty involvement. Indiana University Northwest identified its faculty and staff resources according to the expertise needed to address identified problems. Wayne State University publishes a bi-weekly newsletter recognizing faculty and staff service activities. Montclair State University redesigned its reward system to provide recognition for faculty service. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro has given more time to faculty for service activities.

Seeking External Funding. Four universities — California Polytechnic at Pomona, California State University Hayward, Southern Indiana, and Southwestern Louisiana — reported seeking external funds including AmeriCorps grants to support community service. California State University, San Marcos secured outside funding for development of its community service activities.

Types of Community Service

Survey responses indicate that faculty and students in urban and metropolitan institutions have expanded their range of activities relating to community issues under campus conditions. College professors serve as consultants to industry, state and local governments, and human service agencies seeking ways to deal with problems of the urban environment. Also, faculty and students have extended their scholarship and intellectual inquiry into such problems as juvenile delinquency, drugs and gangs, child welfare, improving urban education, high school dropout prevention, prevention of violence among youth, and homelessness.

The survey asked respondents to identify types of community service in which faculty, students, or administrators were involved. Activities were organized in seven categories: educational service, information analysis and sharing, health services provision, real estate management, infrastructure and economic development, and homelessness. Faculty participation was high-

est in educational service (Table 3) and economic development (Table 4), followed by information analysis and sharing. Over 50 percent of the institutions reported that faculty work in health service provision and assist urban planners regarding infrastructure.

Table 3.
Education Service Engaging Faculty, Students, or Administrators

Activity	%Faculty	%Students	%Administrators
School/college collaboration	93	70	84
Providing technology and/or train in use of technology	88	34	56
Collaborating on research with schools and school personnel	83	47	48
Training teachers for urban schools	83	40	38
Providing educ./training to employees of local businesses	82	16	62
Submitting partnership grant proposals with schools	81	17	61
Conducting pre-college information programs for prospective students	68	54	86
Providing education/training to state or local governments	66	15	46
Opening library/cultural facilities to the community	50	24	72
Managing literacy initiatives for the adult community	49	33	33
Offering scholarships to recruit under-participating student populations	40	19	77
Extending library privileges for school personnel	33	16	50
Jointly operating a public school or other similar facility	21	12	22

Table 4.
Economic Development Activity Engaging Faculty, Students, or Administrators

Activity	%Faculty	%Student	%Administrators
Participation on business/industry advisory groups	80	19	69
Technical assistance to small businesses for technology, information, and research needs	75	36	52
Special university/industry research activities	73	32	46
Cooperative education for student internships	73	73	56
Workforce development	62	16	45
Business/faculty exchange	51	10	27

Faculty and student effort in community service is the best indicator of collaboration and projects to the associations. They listed nearly 350 formal collaborations and an equal number of efforts on campuses to relate scholarly activity directly to community-identified problems. A few examples of reported service activities follow.

Consulting with Industry or State and Local Governments. Jacksonville State University established a manufacturing technology consortium with an army depot to meet the technological needs of local industry; and Penn State Erie-Behrend College provides workforce training in technology to several companies. Among research initiatives, Arizona State University West conducted research market surveys for the Peoria area; The Florida Atlantic/Florida International Universities' joint center for environmental/urban problems conducts applied research for local agencies on public policy options; and St. Cloud State University developed a land-use plan for the City of Avon. The University of Southern Colorado manages a city/county regional business incubator; the University of Southern Mississippi facilitated cooperative strategic planning for Forrest and Lama counties in conjunction with the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development and the Mississippi Power Company; and Montana State University established a center to strengthen local governments' capacity to deliver services

efficiently.

Collaborating or Assisting Human Service Agencies. The Auburn University at Montgomery's School of Nursing reopened a health clinic in an isolated area and employs faculty and nursing students. California State Polytechnic University, Pomona has established a family empowerment project to help families move out of the welfare system; and SUNY College at Geneseo created the SHARE Program for students to assist the elderly in the neighboring area.

Criminal Justice and Protective Service Education. Junior and senior students from Harris-Stowe State College function as assistant caseworkers for juvenile offenders. Faculty in social work and criminal justice at Saginaw Valley State University conducted a study of substance abuse programs in the community. Montana State University-Billings collaborated with the Billings police department on a grant request for a community policing project; and West Virginia State University conducted diversity training for the City of Charleston police.

Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention. The University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, conducted research on the efficacy of intervention programs to reduce drinking among young people. Bowie State University's Violence Prevention Project serves the entire community, and Virginia Commonwealth University's department of psychology has three grant-supported projects which provide school and community-based programs for at-risk youth.

Systematic Involvement in Urban Education. Jacksonville State University has applied research in teaching and learning to pre-service programs for students and an enrichment project for area teachers; California State University, Hayward, established an Urban Teacher Academy working with four school districts, while California State University, Sacramento's "Into the Streets" provides volunteers/tutors/interns in the community. Morgan State University offers pre-college minority students a chance to explore careers in teaching and to work with elementary school children.

Wayne State University models quality public education in an urban setting via its Charter School, a tuition-free middle school open to all Detroit students. Indiana University, Kokomo operates Pathway, a free adult educational skills/college prep program for adults wanting to continue their education. Metropolitan State College of Denver is in a partnership with American Honda Corporation to establish a family educational community to educate at-risk students.

Problems of the Homeless. Boise State University operates a health clinic for the homeless. Texas Woman's University conducted a study of homelessness in Denton; and Sonoma State is one of 12 area colleges and universities participating in the Bay Area Consortium for the Prevention of Homelessness. Cornell University, Statutory Colleges, increased courses integrating service into the curriculum, e.g., a course in Housing and Feeding the Homeless offered by its hotel school.

Urban Development. The University of Northern Colorado works in cooperation with the city of Greeley in developing private housing solutions; Washburn University of Topeka works with neighborhood committees to fix run-down houses in the neighborhoods around the university. The University of Oklahoma's Center for Business and Economic Development works with faculty from the School of Regional and City Planning to provide research, technical assistance education and training for the local community.

Environmental Protection and Preservation. The University of the District of Columbia's water resources research center conducts water testing and experimentation for the entire metropolitan area; and Southwest Texas State University operates the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center for education and research on critical water conservation and resources management in Central Texas. The University of Idaho students participate in an environmental survey to inventory potential sources of contamination from which to protect the aquifer and; the faculty in civil engineering at the University of Texas at El Paso have developed and installed low-tech waste water management systems for "colonias."

Conditions for Community Service

Conditions under which campus members engage in community service vary by group, but a few generalizations are useful. Students tend to be involved where faculty are, but a much smaller percentage of institutions reports student service in as many categories as faculty activity. Education and business internships offer the broadest opportunities for students, and 60 percent of campuses reported student assistance to the homeless as compared to only 38 percent reporting involvement for faculty. Student participation is largely voluntary, encouraged by institutional policy in 27 percent of cases, or by departmental policy in approximately 44 percent of cases, but required by faculty in almost 50 percent. Academic credit is awarded for student participation by slightly more than half of the campuses.

Table 5 (and 6) report conditions affecting faculty involvement in community service. Table 6 shows how responding institutions treat community service in their rewards systems. Comprehensive institutions appear slightly more supportive of faculty, with almost 60 percent taking service into account when making decisions about promotion as compared with 42 percent of the doctoral and research universities. Fifty-three percent of comprehensive schools consider service in tenure decisions compared with 40 percent of research/doctoral respondents. However, it is interesting to contrast the picture of conditions affecting faculty suggested by Table 6, with the responses to the "barriers" questions summarized in Table 1. The apparent contradiction suggests that merely to view service merely as a scholarly activity and to consider it in faculty rewards is not sufficient to provide adequate recognition.

Table 5.
Conditions of Faculty Participation in Community Service*

Conditions	Association Membership Category			
	%All	%AASCU	%Both	%NASULGC
Institution provides seed grants	32	27	41	36
Discretionary funds available	39	38	48	36
Institution-supported release time available	37	38	38	34
Service as scholarly activity	57	62	48	52
Service considered in faculty rewards	61	65	59	54
Sabbatical leave available	31	33	17	34
Other	8	8	7	10

*Responses were not mutually exclusive, therefore percentage columns do not total 100.

Table 6.
Consideration of Faculty Service in Reward Systems*

Category	Association Membership Category			
	%All	%AASCU	%Both	%NASULGC
Recruitment	23	22	28	22
Promotion in rank	52	58	45	42
Granting of tenure	48	53	45	40
Salary increase	37	37	38	36

*Responses were not mutually exclusive, therefore percentage columns do not total 100.

Conclusions

If the foregoing study suggests that institutions are eager to share their successes, it is important to recognize that they are also interested in finding new ideas and new sources of support for their endeavors. Specifically, campus representatives indicated that three types of resources would be of greatest use to them in advancing their institutions' community service objectives. Over 70 percent of respondents in each membership category (i.e., AASCU, NASULGC, or dual members) would like more information on sources of funding, particularly grants, a need met by the recent publication by AASCU's Office of Urban and Metropolitan Programs, in cooperation with the Office of Federal Programs, of *Funding the Urban/Metropolitan Mission: A Resource Directory for Public Colleges and Universities*. Over 55 percent of respondents in each membership category also expressed interest in having access to examples of service activities at other institutions. Finally, over 40 percent in every membership category thought a directory of community service centers would be useful. On average, only about 19 percent of respondents thought either workshops or special problem-solving networks would be very useful.

Respondents to the AASCU/NASULGC Survey of Community Service Activity gave rich and ample evidence of their commitment to and involvement in community service. They also offered a wealth of examples of how a college or university may bring its resources to bear in alleviating some of the most complex and difficult problems facing our urban centers today, while enriching the learning environment and student experience both in and beyond the classroom. From the examples submitted, it appears that, in the long-term, public urban and metropolitan institutions will contribute not only to the resolution of urban problems but also to the development of new kinds of collaborations, which may change the roles of the agencies involved and lead to rethinking and redefining old problems. While public colleges and universities face an increasingly tough fiscal climate, it is apparent that community service is an evolving and increasingly central component of the urban institutional mission.

Suggested Readings

American Association of State Colleges and Universities. *An Executive Introduction to Opportunities in Economic and Community Development*. Washington: AASCU, 1990.

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