

## Summary Cover Sheet

### **Report of Civic Engagement Data Base Action Plan Team June 7, 2007**

#### Current status of action item:

- 2002 Civic Engagement Inventory is on the IUPUI Web site at <http://www.iport.iupui.edu/selfstudy/ce/>. The inventory has not been updated since 2002.
- Web developers in PAII and External Affairs are willing to collaborate with CSL and UITS to redesign inventory.
- We need to decide on a method for collecting information on civic engagement—through deans and directors, through the FASR, or a combination.

#### Recommendations:

- Proceed with development of an updated online Civic Engagement Inventory (or similar site) without waiting for the FASR implementation.
- Phase in use of the FASR as a data collection mechanism if and when it is implemented and if it includes a flagging mechanism to identify civic engagement activities.
- Staff this effort with existing PAII, CSL, and External Affairs personnel and with a new half-time graduate assistant.

#### Implementation:

- Web developers in PAII and External Affairs redesign Civic Engagement Inventory.
- PAII and CSL staff develop e-mail request to deans and directors for entries into inventory related to major CE initiatives.
- PAII and External Affairs developers collaborate with UITS and OPD to develop flagging mechanism in FASR to identify CE activities among individual faculty members and generate invitation to enter activities into CE Inventory.
- Cost: Approximately \$15,000 first 2-3 years; approximately \$7,500 thereafter.

June 7, 2007

TO: Uday Sukhatme, Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Faculties

FROM: Susan Kahn  
Teresa Bennett  
Robert Bringle  
Julie Hatcher

RE: Action Plan Team Report

Last September, you asked us to serve on an Action Plan Team to consider and recommend strategies for developing a data base of civic engagement activities at IUPUI. Over this past year, we have met among ourselves, as well as with other faculty and staff members involved in related projects. Based on these discussions, we present the following summary of needs, strategies, and recommendations for implementation.

#### Background and History

The notion of a civic engagement data base for IUPUI is not a new one. For some years, those of us involved in supporting and assessing civic engagement at IUPUI have believed that a public, searchable data base could be an invaluable tool for making the campus's civic engagement work more visible to our local community, the state, higher education colleagues, and even our own faculty and staff. As the initial request to us to serve on this Action Plan Team notes, such a data base could also be helpful to IUPUI students interested in becoming involved in community engagement and retired faculty and staff hoping to contribute volunteer work.

In 2001-2002, IUPUI formally adopted a new mission statement that included civic engagement as one of three core emphases of the institution and elected to develop a "special emphasis" self-study on civic engagement for its upcoming re-accreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. These decisions gave urgency to the idea of creating a civic engagement data base as a demonstration of the campus's commitment to accountability to our community and regional stakeholders and as an initial step in developing processes for assessing civic engagement. With the guidance of the Civic Engagement Task Force, a predecessor of the Council on Civic Engagement, and programming support from the Office of Information Management and Institutional Research, staff in the Center for Service and Learning contacted deans, center directors, and selected faculty members, requesting that they enter information about major civic engagement initiatives into a "Civic Engagement Inventory." The entries were reviewed and edited for redundancy, then catalogued by topical domain and keywords; the entire data base was incorporated into IUPUI's online institutional portfolio, as part of our Web-based self-study. (See <http://www.iport.iupui.edu/selfstudy/ce/>.)

Three of the members of this task force were involved in the development of the special emphasis self-study on civic engagement and of that initial Civic Engagement Inventory. Once our re-accreditation review was successfully concluded in 2002-2003, we hoped to continue to maintain the inventory. But rather than re-enact the extremely

labor-intensive process of compiling the original inventory, we were persuaded to wait for the introduction of the online Faculty Annual Summary Report (FASR) that was under development. This online FASR would allow us to automate and systematize maintenance of the data base.

During the 2005-2006 academic year, the Office of External Affairs approached the Office of Planning and Institutional Improvement and the Center for Service and Learning with an offer to collaborate on developing an updated online civic engagement data base. Over the course of that year, an ad hoc group of faculty, administrators, and Web developers from these offices met several times to plan a strategy for creating and maintaining an updated Civic Engagement Inventory. Since we continued to be assured that completion and roll-out of the online FASR was imminent, we developed a plan that relied on a “flagging” mechanism to be programmed into the FASR. Faculty members would have the ability to flag activities—whether these fell into the categories of teaching, research, or service—that included civic engagement components, as they filled out the online FASR; the flag would generate an automatic e-mail to those faculty members inviting them to enter their civic engagement activities into the data base. In Spring 2006, we presented this plan to the developers of the FASR in OPD and UITS and they agreed to work with us on development of the flagging mechanism.

#### Current Status and Critical Needs

Today, we are even more persuaded than we were four years ago of IUPUI's need for a civic engagement data base. IUPUI's new mission statement, adopted in November 2005, identifies us as “Indiana's urban research and academic health sciences campus,” responsible for promoting “the educational, cultural, and economic development of central Indiana and beyond.” If anything, the statement makes civic engagement, especially in our core health and life sciences programs, an even stronger emphasis of campus work. An online mechanism that informs stakeholders in the local community and beyond about our civic engagement activities could help us to carry out the mission more effectively, both by enabling stakeholders to quickly identify activities and contact people in given areas and by providing accountability and transparency for civic engagement initiatives. Internally, faculty members and administrators would also benefit from easy access to information on civic engagement activities and their impact. Indeed, we are frequently asked to provide this kind of information; making it available via a searchable data base on a public Web site would enable us to respond easily to these requests.

In addition, since our last re-accreditation review, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association has adopted “engagement” as one of its five accreditation criteria and has stipulated that institutions carry out some assessment of this engagement, at least to the extent of demonstrating that their engagement is valued by their communities. This action reflects increased attention nationally to engagement as a key mission of higher education institutions. “Community Engagement” is part of the new Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Popular college rankings and guides rate institutions on opportunities for community service. National and local awards for service and engagement have proliferated—and IUPUI has won its share of these. Moreover, our increasingly outdated Civic Engagement Inventory of 2001-2002 continues to be visited and used as a model by colleges and universities nationally and internationally.

We are, therefore, convinced that an updated Civic Engagement data base would be used widely and frequently by internal and external constituencies. The main question confronting our Action Plan Team has been whether to continue waiting for the FASR to be released for campus-wide use or to devise another, possibly temporary, strategy for gathering the necessary information.

### Strategy and Implementation

Our Action Plan Team has identified two possible strategies for creating and maintaining a new Civic Engagement Inventory:

1. Continue to work with staff developing the FASR, create a flagging mechanism, as described above, and, once the FASR is available, use the mechanism to trigger e-mail invitations to enter information into the civic engagement data base. This option represents the easiest and least expensive course of action, but still requires the design and development of a new Civic Engagement Inventory to capture details on civic engagement activities that are flagged by the FASR. Pros and cons are as follows:

#### Pros

- The programming required to include a flagging mechanism and generate an automatic e-mail message inviting faculty members to submit entries to the Civic Engagement Inventory is relatively uncomplicated, as we understand it. Staff in PAII and External Affairs have already volunteered to collaborate on this.
- This option would allow us to capture information on most of the civic engagement activities faculty are involved in.
- This is the least labor-intensive and least expensive strategy.

#### Cons

- The development and introduction of the FASR has been repeatedly delayed. We are uncertain about whether we can rely on the current projection of a 2008 release of the FASR to all IUPUI faculty.
- We have no firm assurances that the flagging mechanism will be included in the design of the FASR.
- FASR information about faculty civic engagement activities will be incomplete; it would omit large initiatives run by deans' offices or administrative units from the civic engagement data base. To ensure that the data base is as comprehensive as possible, it might be wise to supplement FASR information with targeted inquiries to deans and administrative units. This task would require staff resources.
- Duplication of information is bound to occur. Some effort and expense would be required to support staff to review entries into the

data base for duplication and to compile information from multiple entries into a single entry.

### Budget Implications

Oversight of the project could be accomplished by existing staff in CSL and/or PAll. In addition, we would recommend hiring a 20-hour/week graduate assistant for the first year of operation to help with structuring and categorizing information in the data base, respond to faculty inquiries, and review and edit entries. We anticipate that thereafter only a 10-hour/week graduate assistant would be required; this might be part of a position responsible for working with other sets of activities (e.g., international activities, diversity-related activities) that are also flagged within the FASR. **Cost:** Year 1: approximately \$15,000; thereafter: approximately \$7,500 annually.

2. Proceed with development of a civic engagement data base without waiting for introduction of the FASR. After constructing a new Civic Engagement Inventory, we could begin this effort with a mass e-mailing to deans' offices and directors of key campus centers with civic engagement missions. Annual reports and lists of highlights submitted by deans and administrative units to PAll also provide good starting points for identifying major initiatives and contact people. When the FASR is eventually implemented, we can transition to use of the flagging mechanism or to limited use of it. Pros and cons include:

#### Pros

- We could start development of the Civic Engagement Inventory and gathering of information immediately, without waiting for the FASR or risking further delays. This course of action would enable us to have a database at least partially filled by late Fall 2007 or early Spring 2008.
- Gathering information from the sources described will enable us to capture information on most major civic engagement projects and initiatives.

#### Cons

- Coverage of civic engagement activities among individual faculty members is likely to be incomplete until the introduction of the FASR.
- This approach will require more work and staff resources than the FASR alternative because the FASR is not automatically generating requests for a faculty member to enter activities into the CEI.

### Budget Implications

Oversight could be carried out by existing staff, but the implementation work required will likely be more extensive. This option would require a half-time

graduate assistant to spend at least two years on gathering and categorizing initial data, and possibly working to support incorporation of additional information from FASR during the second year, assuming that the FASR is rolled out in 2008-2009. **Cost:** \$15,000/year for two to three years; thereafter: \$7,500/year.

### Recommendation

The second strategy outlined above seems to us to be the best course to take. This choice would allow us to begin this fall to gather information on the largest campus and school initiatives from deans, directors, and others identified in annual unit reports. Whether or not the FASR is available on schedule, we will be able to make available a Civic Engagement Inventory that provides information on major civic engagement work within the next year. When the FASR is ultimately introduced, we can begin to rely on it to provide us with information about noteworthy individual faculty activities. At that point, we anticipate that we can decrease the frequency of data requests to deans and directors to every two years (or systematize an annual request for updated data).

Here is an abbreviated schedule of activities required to accomplish this strategy:

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|-------------------------|--|
| Summer 2007:            | Civic Engagement Inventory redesigned and reprogrammed (CSL, PAII, Solution Center, and External Affairs staff to determine information to be included; programming, PAII/IMIR Web developer).   |
| Fall 2007:              | Requests to deans and directors and to other contact persons identified in unit annual reports and highlights. Information begins to be compiled and edited (CSL assessment specialist; graduate assistant; work-study student in PAII).   |
| Spring and Summer 2008: | Continue to compile and edit information. Make follow-up contacts as necessary. Collaborate with FASR staff to facilitate incorporation of civic engagement flagging mechanism. Make Civic Engagement Inventory available on institutional portfolio and IUPUI Web sites. Track Web site hits and solicit input on usability and usefulness of inventory; make changes as indicated (graduate assistant; work-study student; PAII/IMIR Web developer; Web developers in External Affairs; assessment specialist in CSL). |
| Fall 2008:              | Requests for updates and additional information to deans, directors, and other contacts. Compile and edit information received. Continue collaborating with FASR developers. Answer questions, as necessary, from faculty completing FASR (graduate assistant; work-study student; PAII/IMIR Web developer; External Affairs Web developers).  |

Spring 2009: Receive first output from FASR. Edit and review information for duplication. Answer faculty questions. Track Web site hits and solicit input on usability and usefulness of site; make changes as indicated (graduate assistant; work-study student; PAII/IMIR Web developer; Web developers in External Affairs; CSL assessment specialist).

Thereafter: E-mail deans and directors each Fall with reminder to update information in Civic Engagement Inventory. Continue to receive input from FASR. Edit information for duplication and readability. Track Web site hits.

### Budget

As outlined under Option 2, above.

### Evaluation

Evaluation of the Civic Engagement Inventory need not be extensive or complex. Tracking the number of Web site hits, specific page views, and domains of visitors is relatively simple. UITS should assume responsibility for usability testing and user support. In the first two years and occasionally thereafter, we might consider convening focus groups of internal and external stakeholders to determine their opinions of the usefulness and usability of the inventory. Members of this Action Plan Team are responsible for much of IUPUI's reporting on civic engagement and will be able to make their own evaluations of the usefulness of the Civic Engagement Inventory for reporting purposes.

We hope that this report and its recommendations are helpful to you. Please let us know if we can answer any questions and, of course, about which course of action you think best for moving forward with this Action Plan.