



STEVENSON CENTER

FOR COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Illinois State University

Strategic Plan

Fall 2006

Campus Box 4200
Normal, IL 61790-4200
Telephone (309)438-7090, Facsimile (309)438-5228, E-mail StevensonCenter@ilstu.edu
<http://www.StevensonCenter.org>

Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development

Strategic Plan -- Fall 2006

Mission

The Stevenson Center at Illinois State University promotes community and economic development in the U.S. and abroad. The Center sets the pace for public service and scholarship through a unique combination of coursework, research, professional practice, and collaboration with communities.”

Goal 1: Students

“A Stevenson Center student will acquire theoretical and applied knowledge of community and economic development, as well as the tools for continued research and practical application leading to positive and lasting change.”

Objectives:

- I. Students will gain knowledge of community and economic development practice and research through a core set of classes. The learning goals of the Applied Community and Economic Development Sequence are met through this core, selected courses in the student’s degree program, and the professional practice.
 - a. Orient students, provide program manual, and informally advise students, from recruitment through alumni relations and everything in between
 - b. Assist students with registration—overrides and requests for Professional Practice credits
 - c. Arrange off-campus assistantships and professional practice internships and solicit feedback from supervisors and students
 - d. Provide process by which student practical experiences are educational and related to the learning goals
 - e. Collect and analyze student feedback on curriculum and revise curriculum as needed
 - f. Use faculty feedback on quality of student coursework, capstones, and theses in curricular reform efforts
 - g. Gather syllabi and assignments from core courses and match with learning goals
 - h. Gather comprehensive list of electives from across departments and colleges
 - i. Establish a curriculum subcommittee to the Board who can handle some of the above strategies

- II. Stevenson Center students, from the efforts of faculty and staff will have professional development opportunities through conferences, on-campus workshops, engagement in the community, and research.
- a. Bring students in the field back to campus for workshops with current students
 - b. Assist with Hoon Mok Chung and Adlai E. Stevenson II lecture series
 - c. Use POL/SOA 470 as a means of connecting our students with the community
 - d. Include students in community-based projects and research
 - e. Host micro-credit conference or other workshops for the benefit of the community
 - f. Fund travel to conferences and/or for speakers to come to ISU
 - g. Pursue opportunities for students to engage programs at Western Illinois University
- III. Students will engage in meaningful professional practice internships that serve communities and organizations while furthering students' understanding of community and economic development.
- a. Engage Fellows/Interns in placement process and help Masters International students through Peace Corps process
 - b. Assist students with paperwork necessary to engage in professional practice, whether through Peace Corps or an internship
 - c. Research organizations with which students can work
 - d. Check-in with students and mentor as needed
 - e. Solicit feedback from internship supervisors
 - f. Solicit reports from students and issue grades
 - g. Track and/or set up capstone/thesis presentations
 - h. Provide avenues (including capstone papers and theses) that allow students to connect class concepts with their assistantship/internship work
 - i. Work toward lowering placement costs (as the budget will allow) so more internships fit the Mission

- IV. The Stevenson Center will foster strong connections among its students, faculty, staff, and partners.
- a. Office is welcoming to all
 - b. Hold social gatherings on and off-campus
 - c. Provide semester updates to faculty in all affiliated departments
 - d. Maintain student connections to host departments through assistantships, capstones, theses, and student associations
 - e. Convene Board and Advisory Board meetings as needed
 - f. Meet with all students regularly or as needed
 - g. Conduct one site visit per intern and off-campus grad assistant as logistically feasible
 - h. Support work of ACED Students Association
 - i. Be open to connections with RPCVs in the region; as possible, include them in newsletter, on-line discussion forum, etc.
 - j. Serve as a resource for scheduled brownbag talks in which ACED/ACD students would be interested
 - k. Connect ACED/MI/PC students to international faculty from host country or country of interest
 - l. Outreach to other/new faculty for Board participation or other level of participation
 - m. Add on-line discussion forum to the website
 - n. Establish twice per year newsletter with stories from current students, alumni, faculty, and partners
 - o. Present Stevenson Center programs at each of our three/four departments' meetings at least every two years
 - p. Expand connections to Latin American and Latino Studies, International Studies, American Democracy Project, Professional Practice advisors, FOCUS Initiative graduate advisors, etc.

Goal 2: Community Partners

“The Stevenson Center fosters mutually beneficial relationships with various local, national, and international entities to further their community and economic development efforts.”

Objectives:

- I. The Stevenson Center will continuously seek, cultivate, and assess opportunities and relationships with community and economic development organizations locally and more broadly.
 - a. Use graduate assistant to identify and research potential host organizations
 - b. Offer cost reduction to select host organizations hosting students, based on competitive process (internships) or Federal Work Study (assistantships)
 - c. Bring faculty into community service projects
 - d. Maintain/improve relations with Peace Corps (regionally and nationally); maintain/update Memorandum of Cooperation
 - e. Establish newsletter for partners and stakeholders
 - f. Establish reciprocal web links to partner organizations

- II. Stevenson Center staff will facilitate the matching of student interns with host organizations to the benefit of both.
 - a. Continue group process for internship placement
 - b. Identify and approach potential host organizations
 - c. Evaluate student reaction to placement
 - d. Respond to requests from host organizations thoroughly and in a timely manner
 - e. Solicit leads/referrals from range of sources
 - f. Improve marketing of students (e.g., expand this section on website, create one-page fact sheet)
 - g. Affiliated faculty and Advisory Board Members assist in identifying host organizations; share resumes and other documents with them during the placement process

- III. Stevenson Center faculty, staff, and students will increasingly engage in direct service to communities and organizations.
 - a. Continue outreach from ACED Students Association
 - b. Continue/expand: grant-writing training, economic impact analyses, brownfields redevelopment, and GIS services
 - c. In response to needs/requests, use assets to add new services and programs

Goal 3: Program Development

The Stevenson Center continuously seeks, assesses, and embraces opportunities to serve students, communities, faculty, and ISU.

Objectives:

- I. To promote continuous quality improvement, Stevenson Center staff and stakeholders will regularly evaluate programs and services.
 - a. Continue 1st-year interview, 2nd year survey, and alumni survey
 - b. Engage in Program Review per IBHE requirements
 - c. Collect evaluation forms from grant-writing training attendees
 - d. Gather information from students who do not choose to attend or who leave the program
 - e. Affiliated faculty review program manual and placement process
 - f. Work with offices on campus that already collect and analyze student data and could assist with other kinds of evaluation
 - g. Update evaluation form used by student's supervisors to assess work performance
 - h. Work with the University Assessment Office on a process to evaluate impact of assistantships, placements, and other services provided?
 - i. To assess how goals are being met, match work plans from placements with learning goals

- II. The Stevenson Center will actively recruit quality students, meeting capacity and maintaining balance across departments/programs.
 - a. Respond to queries completely and in a timely manner
 - b. Facilitate campus visits
 - c. Handle application paperwork; conduct interviews
 - d. Develop and distribute new brochure
 - e. Move application materials online and set-up message board for students and alumni
 - f. Assess utility of recruitment trips
 - g. Free time for Assistant Director to implement range of free and low-cost means of publicizing programs for stronger recruitment
 - h. Seek advice from Board and Advisory Board regarding how to advance recruitment

- III. The off-campus assistantship and professional practice placement process will be equitable, sustainable, transparent, and completed in a timely manner.
 - a. Continuously improve current placement system, based on student and host organization feedback (NOTING that departments play a big role in who is on-versus off- campus for assistantships, and that is not likely to change)

- IV. The Stevenson Center will continue to serve Illinois State University by engaging in public service and community/economic development activities that complement the institution's teaching and research functions.
 - a. Continue to build community project links with faculty
 - b. Make connections with American Democracy Project, the FOCUS Initiative, and Student Volunteer Center
 - c. Document the Center's and faculty public service activities and scholarship; link to *Educating Illinois, 2003-2010*

- V. The Stevenson Center will actively support ISU faculty in their pursuit of the scholarship and teaching of community and economic development.
- a. Forward information regarding grant opportunities to faculty
 - b. Offer grant-writing assistance
 - c. Develop working papers series; published on-line
 - d. Develop mini-grant program for research addressing some aspect of community and economic development and that involves students (publication would include our tag line)
 - e. Link affiliated faculty webpage to current vitae, publication lists and personal websites
 - f. Place publications on bulletin board
 - g. Claim faculty research in the Center's productivity reports to the College
 - h. Give an annual award to faculty who are promoting scholarship of CED and engaging students
 - i. Establish a research subcommittee to the Board that will assist with these strategies
- VI. The Stevenson Center will develop and maintain meaningful long-term relationships with alumni.
- a. Invite an alumnus back for homecoming each year to reconnect them with campus and for the benefit of current students
 - b. Send job postings
 - c. Set up message board online
 - d. Send regular e-newsletters
 - e. Ask additional alumni to serve on Advisory Board

- VII. The Stevenson Center responds to community-driven needs and seeks progressive program opportunities through existing assets, enhanced networks, and an environment that embraces evolving opportunities.
- a. Provide support for the establishment and administration of the McLean County Small Business Incubator
 - b. Pursue possibility of student exchange with the Independent University of Bangladesh
 - c. Advance and promote McLean County economic indices (coincident and leading)
 - d. Gain advice from Advisory Board on expanding networks and services and meeting community needs
 - e. Explore new possibilities (pursuing those that best use existing assets, most meet needs, and provide for the greatest sustainability). These include:
 - i. Expand the ACED/ACD Sequence to other departments/colleges and their degree programs
 - ii. Be a resource to local micro-credit programs
 - iii. Become the downstate Illinois curricular home for IEDC Basic Economic Development, GIS, and demographic training courses
 - iv. Expand economic indices and forecasting to include more counties
 - v. Develop a center for non-profit management
 - vi. Partner more with the Applied Social Research Unit on community projects
 - vii. Develop own degree granting program in community and economic development

Goal 4: Sustainability

“The Stevenson Center, with the support of Illinois State University, actively seeks and commits personnel and resources for the implementation of its programs.”

Objectives:

- I. Secure capital (financial, human, community, etc) for implementation of programs.
 - a. Use undergraduate interns for Center operations, research, and public relations
 - b. Maintain/strengthen relationships with International Studies, Graduate School, each of 3 departments, Research and Sponsored Programs, Registrar, Scheduling, and Human Resources
 - c. Continue AmeriCorps relationship as possible
 - d. Continue Federal Work Study arrangement as possible
 - e. With assistance of on-campus resources, continuously revise/improve website
 - f. Secure recurring General Revenue funding
 - g. Seek grant funding and/or gifts from corporate/individual donors
 - h. Approach Adlai E. Stevenson III about using his mailing list to solicit donations; work with Foundation to update the list and solicit
 - i. Engage alumni in programs, Advisory Board, on-line web discussion board, etc.

- II. Provide professional development opportunities for staff and Board members.
 - a. Determine professional development interests of staff and how the Stevenson Center can help them fulfill those interests
 - b. Fund professional development opportunities that fit staff and Board member interests and the Stevenson Center Mission
 - c. Provide networking opportunities for Board and Advisory Board members

- III. Ensure that staff size, qualifications, compensation, and funding sources for positions are commensurate with Center's programs and ISU guidelines.
 - a. Develop plan to regularly evaluate, including consultation with Human Resources
 - b. Develop plan to secure stable funding for staff positions
 - c. Add additional staff as resources allow

- IV. Encourage, engage, and utilize Board and Advisory Board's talents and ideas.
 - a. Provide supporting letters for Board member's tenure and promotion files
 - b. Develop goals and by-laws for boards
 - c. Establish subcommittees to accomplish strategies
 - d. Create networking opportunities
 - e. Explore rewards for service

- V. Ensure infrastructure is adequate for needs of the Center.
 - a. Acquire office technology (e.g., software, work stations, laptop, etc.) per our program and staff needs
 - b. Secure current space for the return from Williams Hall
 - c. Secure an additional office for new staff/undergraduate interns
 - d. Create database to track and manage information relating to prospective/current/former students and host organizations (import and eliminate many of our spreadsheets)
 - e. Analyze paper flow in office and how it can be reduced

Evaluation of progress on these strategies will occur once per semester. This plan is to be reevaluated by Stevenson Center Staff and Board in the Spring of 2009.