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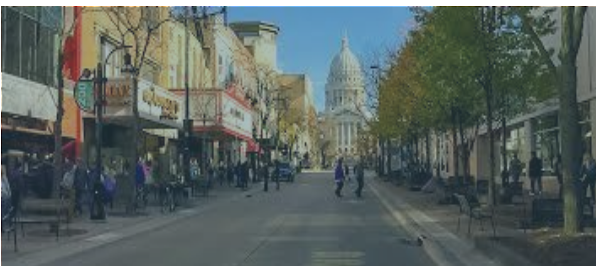
Better • Places • Together

Breaking Down Silos & Building New Partnerships: Next Gen Community-University Partnerships

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**Gavin Luter, UW-Madison
Ohio Program for Campus Safety and Mental Health**
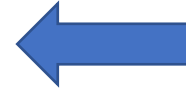
Why do I love Ohio?

Who am I?

- From Southerner to Northerner to Midwesterner
- Higher education, nonprofit experience
- Undergraduate and graduate teaching experience
- Scholarly work
- Current role @ UniverCity Alliance

The problem

Communities:

1. Scope of challenges are huge
2. Lots of practical experience
3. Capacity & bandwidth issues
4. Desire for thought partners

?

Higher Education:

1. Siloed experts
2. Willing to ask questions
3. Need for real-world experience/training
4. Desire to make an impact

We have a culture problem in higher education

Community Engagement is not supported by:
- Policies
- Practices
- Structures

So, we need a new culture…

There's a framework…

DIMENSION I: PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DIMENSION II: FACULTY SUPPORT FOR AND INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DIMENSION III: STUDENT SUPPORT FOR AND INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DIMENSION IV: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

DIMENSION V: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR INSTITUTIONALIZING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION   Furco, 2009

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We can't get that overnight

WHAT CAN WE DO IN THE MEANTIME?

The question

What if we could connect *existing* courses and other university structures to a single local government over an academic year to work on critical and vexing projects identified by local government staff and do so at a scale that magnifies the value for all?

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Advisory Board — UniverCity Alliance, University of Wisconsin–Madison

- Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Division of Extension
- Data Science Institute
- Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture
- COWS
- Global Health Institute
- Computer Sciences
- Institute for Research on Poverty
- Cartography Lab
- Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
- Population Health Institute
- Morgridge Center for Public Service
- Law School
- School of Medicine
- La Follette School of Public Affairs
- School of Business
- School of Human Ecology
- School of Education

UniverCity Year: Scope & Process

2016-2017
City of Monona
Dane County

2017-2018
Green County
Pepin County

2019
Adams County
Brown County
La Crosse County
Village of Marshall
City of Wisconsin Rapids
Village of Egg Harbor

2020
Marathon County
Milwaukee County
Racine County
Village of Waunakee

UCY Four-Step Process

Local government partner identifies issues or questions.

UCY matches projects with solution-based courses.

UW-Madison students work on the issues and questions.

Local government receives research, reports, designs, and implementation support.

epic-network

The Wisconsin Idea in Action & to Scale

Our first 8 years:
- ✓ 270+ projects & counting
- ✓ 1700+ students involved
- ✓ 80 courses
- ✓ 29 Communities

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Health, Well-Being, & Equity

Green County

- Mental Health Navigator (Implemented); Teen Intervene Program (Toolkit being used), Data sharing to combat opioid crisis (Secured grant)

Wood County Health Department

- Creating a ROI model for Community Health Improvement Plan, roadmap for health equity, improving technology to activate trails

Adams County process for prioritizing mental health services

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Native Nations, Equity in Hiring, Media Campaigns

City of Madison investigating creation of a "Friends of" group for Civil Rights

Involved Departments: Public Health, Environmental Studies, Civil Society and Community Studies, Industrial Systems Engineering

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Sustainability

- Outagamie County: Sustainability Action Plan for Appleton Airport, process for organizing county departments' approaches to sustainability

- Marathon County: Measured public perceptions of Fenwood Creek for next step of public outreach, strategies for reducing salt use

- Brown County: Cost/benefit analysis for alternative uses for blue-green algae, strategies for harvesting the algae

- Juda School District: Energy audit, Alternative energy design, Resulted in more solar panels on the school & lower energy costs (saving $30,000 per year)

Involved Departments: Public Affairs, Civil & Environmental Engineering, Energy Analysis and Policy, Extension, Environmental Studies, Industrial Systems Engineering

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Criminal Justice Reform

Racine County

- Developing strategies for cultural competence in building of a new juvenile justice facility; Recommending changes for Alternatives to Corrections through Education (ACE) program; Designing community and family engagement strategies for new facility

Marathon County

- Evaluating drug treatment and OWI court; Evaluating arrest-decision models

Brown County

- Evidence-based recommendations for prisoner re-entry

Involved Departments: Public Health, Law, Psychology, Human & Family Studies, Public Affairs

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Child Care

Outagamie County

- Strategies for implementing cost-savings within facilities, innovations for increasing wages of child care workers

La Crosse County

- Cost/benefit analysis for policy measures to address affordability

Involved Departments: Public Affairs, School of Education

Housing

- Affordable housing site analysis, values, and risks (Currently pitching rural, affordable pocket neighborhoods)
- Senior housing site plans (City council pitching to developers)

Site Acquisition Cost	$372,700
Construction Budget	$8,220,000
Developer Fee	$822,000
Total Capital Budget	$9,414,700
Less: HOME Grant	$(400,000)
Less: HUD Grant	$ (2,235,000)
Less: Tax Credit Equity	$ (4,801,497)
Net Capital Budget	$1,978,203

Income 2015	30% AMI	50%AMI	Market
$43,990	$13,197	$21,995	$26394
Affordable Rent	$329.93	$549.88	$1319.7

Involved Departments: Real Estate & Urban Economics, Civil & Environmental Engineering

Economic Development

- Polk County re-branding materials (logo, SWOT analysis, stakeholder engagement plans)

- Outagamie County Mosquito Hill Nature Center revenue capture strategies

- Tourism Marketing (Using marketing materials)

- Trade Market Analysis & Planning (New businesses locating in Brodhead; Brought new stakeholders to table in Adams)

- Infill development plans (Monroe building a pocket park)

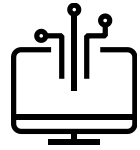- Developing strategies to link arts, culture, and economic development

Involved Departments: Journalism/Communications, Extension, Agriculture & Applied Economics, MBA in Arts Administration, MBA in Marketing, Urban Planning, Landscape architecture

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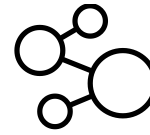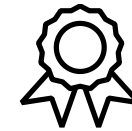
Examples of work
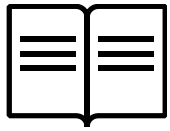
Best practice reports

Data analysis
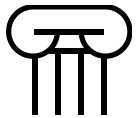
Communications/ promotional materials
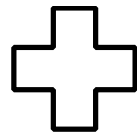
Data visualization

Program evaluation

Site plans
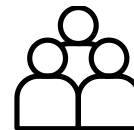
Policy recommendations

Design recommendations

Health impact assessments

Community engagement

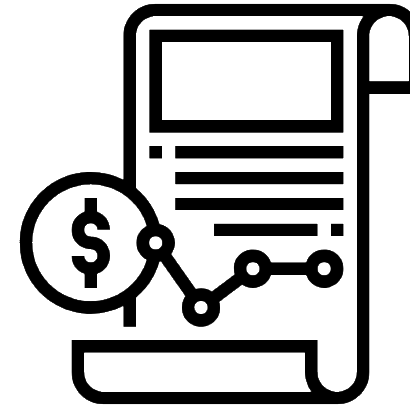Staff trainings

Case study comparisons

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Business Model

- Program Fees
- Investors
  - American Family Insurance
  - Alliant Energy Foundation
  - Epic Systems
- Internal Competitive Grants
- Alumni
- In-Kind
- State funding?

Students make real-world connections

"Working with [the community partner] was truly a unique and wonderful experience. The new challenges and opportunities we faced helped us blend our industrial engineering skills together with practical application. As a student team we were proud of the work we accomplished through the semester and look forward to applying similar lessons in future endeavors." – Industrial Systems Engineering Student

"Being able to talk to city staff and have them tell our class what they want is giving me more experience for the real world. What we do in this class will impact the community, when in normal academic settings, it just impacts our grade." – Environmental Studies Studen

"I feel like I have gained real world experience and skills to take further in my full-time job starting this summer, especially about the process of creating something that is very important to several people. It was a very real-world experience that demonstrated the importance of planning and organizing long-term projects." – Digital Studies Student

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Evaluation

- Survey for faculty, students, partners (post) – each semester
- Follow-up interviews with protocol – each year
- Semi-annual meetings (tracking project impacts)
- Ripple Effects Mapping (new!)

Possibilities:

- Student reflections

Community Impact Mapping

- Based on interviews → Create list

- Quotes from elected officials & staff

- Lack of systematic process

- Hard to tell cogent story

Dane County

- Frequent users of county services project advancing through new data effort.

- Affordable workforce housing project informing policy and funding choices.

Green County

- Juda School (K-12) Green Energy & Efficiency project recommendations moving forward in the school, and is basis of RFP development.

- Three projects around opioid addiction services, on data sharing, outpatient opioid detoxification and increasing bystander naloxone distribution funded through grants.

- Community Powered Kitchen effort to begin pilot with a restaurant partner.

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Strengths & Impacts

- What makes you feel a sense of accomplishment?

- What have been initial impacts of your work?
  - New relationships
  - Learning new things about your impact area
  - Engaging new stakeholders
  - Changing your institution's culture (etc.)

- What difference has your partnership made in individuals, families, communities, local and regional environments/ecologies?

Evaluating Impacts

Social Ecological
Model
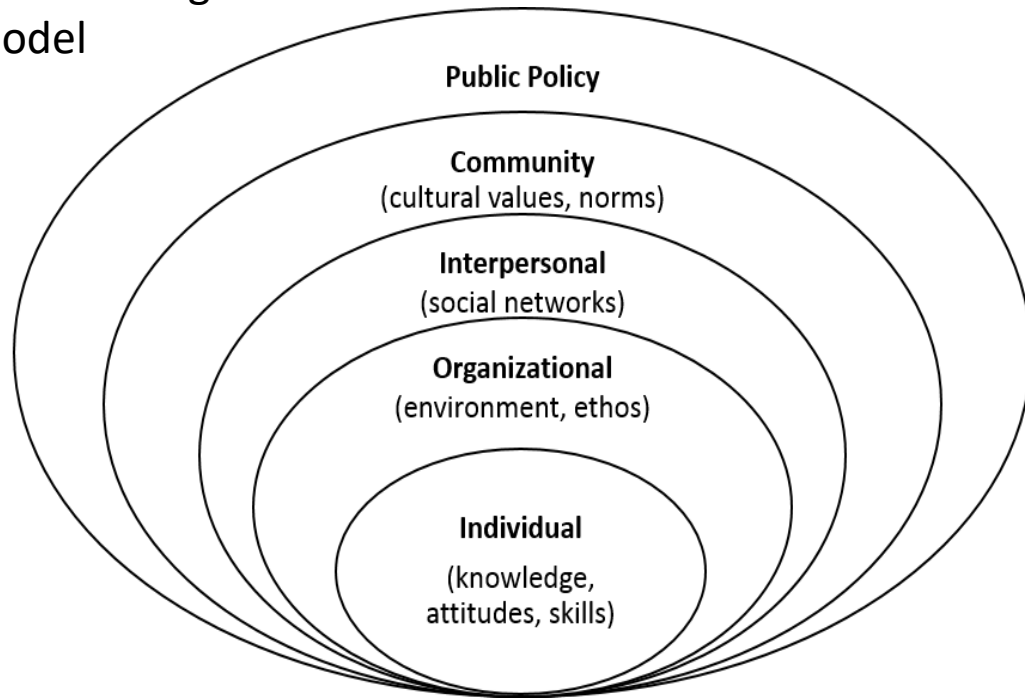
Community
Capitals

Strengths & Impacts

Your Programming (What you do, what was it?)

What changes (*outcomes*) have occurred and in what *context*? How did those changes occur (*mechanisms*)?

What impact has your programming had on the different types of Community Capital (social, human, built, etc.) and on individuals, families, organizations and communities (*the social ecology*)?

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What have we learned?

- ❑ Capturing 360 evaluation
- ❑ Digital community engagement can work
- ❑ Funding model (more university entities are charging for experiences)
- ❑ Framing all projects through sustainability (SDGs)
- ❑ Multi-stakeholder groups scoping projects is always better
- ❑ Talk about implementation early & often
- ❑ Structured university involvement can help jump-start projects
- ❑ Willing partners only
- ❑ Communicating with elected officials along the way
- ❑ Lack of incentives to support the work

Common Challenges: 4 Areas

- Design of the partnership

- Building collaborative relationships

- Managing / sustaining the partnership

- Cultural / equity and inclusion

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Challenges: Design of the partnership

- No shared vision

- Misaligned values

- Mutual benefits are not clear

- No clear definition of success (e.g. not clear who we are trying to serve or what outcomes we hope to see)

- Lack of documentation (e.g. no MOU)

Challenges: Building collaborative relationships

- Difficulty establishing trust and respect

- Scope of the project is too narrow or too broad

- Project is disorganized, or the organizational norms are not clear or not followed

- No clear dynamic champion for the partnership

- Lack of staff preparation

- Power imbalances among staff / faculty / students

Challenges: Managing/sustaining partnership

- Partnership is not integrated into the mission of our respective institutions (e.g. lack of institutional support)

- Lacking clear processes to handle communication, decision-making, and change management

- No clear point of contact (either university or community partner)

- No clear evaluation (process and/or outcome) or assessment of progress

- Disagreement over funding

- No celebration of successes

- Partnership is too inflexible and cannot evolve based on new learning

- Staff turnover

- Disagreement over facilities use

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Challenges: Cultural / equity and inclusion

- Discrimination (e.g. staff are unprepared to deal with diverse populations, therefore discriminatory practices arise)

- Microaggressions

- Lack of focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Structural racism

"SMARTIE GOALS"

Opportunities for Improvement: Power Sharing

- Co-created projects

- Formal recognition (credentials, course credit, stipends, campus benefits)

- Consider building long-term partners, not 1-time clients

- Co-writing or presentation opportunities

- Remember the simple things: Can the partner access a campus parking space? Can you all share files easily? Can they navigate campus buildings? Consider external partner ambassadors.

- Explicit discussions to share norms / expectations for campus & community environments

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Opportunities for Improvement: Building relationships

- Initial meetings:
  - Agree on expectations: What do you hope to accomplish?
  - Provide training and orientation to the external partner about the university, your department, etc.
  - External partner provides orientation to faculty about their organization (don't assume you already know about the other organization by reputation)
  - What shared opportunities could each partner attend? In the community and on campus?
  - Discuss communications norms / expectations
  - Assess and discuss outcome expectations
  - Assess impact and process
  - Agree on final deliverable (be honest about what you can and can't do)
- Document all of these expectations, norms, processes, etc in an MOU, project description form, etc.

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What changes are needed on your campus?

What do you need to get started?

gavin@cows.org

www.univercity.wisc.edu