

## CHAPTER SIX

### CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

***Criterion Statement: As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.***

The mission of USI is to prepare students “to live wisely” and to support education, social and economic growth, and civic and cultural awareness in southwestern Indiana. The University is a broad-based institution offering instruction, research, and service that support a comprehensive array of baccalaureate and master’s degrees.

Community leaders have supported USI since its inception by providing a solid basis for its growth and development and ensuring a bright future. The institution provides programs and services for part-time, commuting, and older students as well as traditional college-age students. From its founding in 1965, it has developed and expanded partnerships with a wide variety of regional agencies, committing itself to a distinctive approach to applied scholarship and learning. Outreach activities derive from the mission of the University. As a public institution, it counsels and assists business and industry as well as social, educational, governmental, and health agencies to higher levels of efficiency and improved services.

The University serves many constituencies. Criterion Five examines USI’s relationships with key groups of people—students, alumni, local, regional, state, and national organizations—that look to the institution for its expertise in professional development and other outreach programs. As a public institution, it maintains the necessary disinterest that allows it to serve the common good, allowing different interest groups to meet and to work together in a supportive environment. Outreach and engagement activities, integral to the mission of the University, offer programs that are mutually beneficial, whether they are traditional services that the institution offers or programs that emerge from collaborative planning and development. Their range is broad, from individual programs and service learning to large-scale regional development projects.

***Core Component 5A: The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.***

Since 2001, sustained enrollment growth has been accompanied by additional offerings of educational programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The emergence of an expanded network of partnerships, increased collaborative efforts with constituents, and growth in the scale and scope of outreach activities underscore the University’s ongoing commitment to addressing the needs of its constituencies.

**5A.1: Commitments are shaped by the mission and the capacity to support them.**

The University seeks to advance social well-being, civic and cultural awareness, and economic growth within its service area. In the context of its intellectual capital, financial, and technological resources, and an awareness of the expectations and needs of its constituencies, the University actively approaches the fulfillment of its commitments. It is continually evaluating the congruence between its policies and activities and its mission.

Since 2001, nine new undergraduate majors and one new graduate program have been added. These programs reflect awareness by various academic units of the evolving needs of constituencies within the University's service area. The University has been responsive to workforce and employer needs identified in studies prepared by the Hudson Institute and the University President's Task Force on Economic and Workforce Development. In particular, the introduction of bachelor degrees in engineering and applied computer science represent an important step in addressing critical workforce gaps in the University's service region. The University has also designed new curricular offerings such as master's degrees in Public Administration, Health Services Administration, and Occupational Therapy. The Bower Suhrheinrich College of Education and Human Services responded to the needs of our local partners in P-12 education by developing the Early Childhood and Exceptional Needs majors even though the typical "critical mass" of students did not yet exist.

Recent economic and workforce development initiatives involving the University provide another illustration of commitments that are closely tied to the institution's mission. Within the past five years, the University helped to create the [Quad Counties Development Commission](#) (QCDC) as a precursor to the establishment of an economic development district (EDD) for a four-county region comprising Gibson, Posey, Vanderburgh, and Warrick counties. The University provided the technical and support services that facilitated the formation of the Commission in 2002 and currently provides office space and management support for the activities of the Commission which include economic and demographic studies of the region, promoting regional economic coordination, and providing assistance in developing economic development project proposals. USI is now a partner in an effort to establish an economic development umbrella organization for the same four-county region, with QCDC becoming its community development unit.

Other economic and workforce development initiatives include specific projects linked to establishing long-term relationships that can impact workforce development. Examples include a partnership with ALCOA Warrick Operations to expand in-house training and a contract to run the UAW-Ford Skills Enhancement program at a local Ford facility, as well as creation of such customized programs as the on-site Master of Science in Industrial Management programs for REXAM Closures, Bristol Myers-Squibb, and Mead Johnson Nutritionals. (See 4B.2)

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*Such commitments—serving the common good, collaborating with constituents, and sustaining internal dynamics that focus on service—make the University a **Connected Organization**.*

**5A.2: The University understands the changing needs of constituencies via environmental scanning.**

The University learns about the expectations and needs of its constituencies through information channels developed as a result of previous service and engagement activities as well as targeted information gathering conducted by the University. An example of the latter is the study of economic and workforce trends in the service region by a task force appointed in 1999 by the University's president. Data collection by the task force necessitated extensive interaction between the University and individuals, businesses, government agencies, community organizations, and other educational institutions. Findings and recommendations from this study offered important insights about existing and likely future educational needs in the service region. Moreover, during the last three years, these insights have provided the impetus for a number of curricular changes and initiatives started by the University. These include the change from engineering technology to engineering, the advanced nursing BA/BS, applied computer science, Connect with Southern Indiana, and the Center for Applied Research and Economic Development.

Periodically, the University analyzes the characteristics and the quality of educational experiences of its student population through student evaluations of teaching, student advising surveys, Freshman Year Experience Surveys, and Surveys of Student Engagement. The University is also kept updated about the emerging trends in the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of its service area through the activities of the QCDC and faculty projects such as the Evansville Fact Book and analyses of the economic impact of the University on the local economy.

As a result of its partnerships and interaction with individuals, community organizations, government agencies, and businesses, the University is cognizant of the findings of needs assessment studies. Membership of University administrators, faculty, and staff on the boards of community organizations provides one way for the University to obtain insights about the evolving needs and expectations of its constituencies.

The results of environmental scanning conducted outside the University are also available through the network of partnerships that the University has developed in the past two decades. For example, as one of the 19 needs-assessment sponsors, the University has access to the results of comprehensive community assessment studies conducted periodically by the United Way of Southwestern Indiana

Systematic information gathering through such means as focus group sessions and community surveys is a third source, used especially when new academic offerings are being considered. In 2004 the University conducted a series of focus groups to determine how well the University addresses its core mission and to learn more about constituent

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understanding of the University's outreach and engagement role. More than 900 faculty, students, staff, community leaders, and Board of Trustees members participated. Ideas for new academic programs and outreach activities were suggested.

*Based on the wide range of mechanisms that provide information on existing social and economic conditions and likely changes in the future, the University is well aware of the expectations and needs of its constituencies. Further, through its commitments and existing planning mechanisms such as the Academic Planning Council and the budget hearing process, the University is actively engaged as a **Future-Oriented Organization**.*

### **5A.3: The University is attentive to the diversity of its constituencies.**

USI's constituencies are numerous and varied. In addition to the standard array of traditional and nontraditional students, others include children from ages two to six enrolled in Children's Center programs, K-12 students in the Southern Indiana Japanese School, business people and economic development officials, international students, alumni, donors, athletic fans, employees, parents, incarcerated women in health awareness programs, local elected officials, retired individuals in cultural appreciation programs, theatre patrons, heritage tourism site operators and many more.

The University is clearly attentive to the development of students and other constituencies. The Activities Programming Board, student organizations, and the Student Government Association, among others, support students, as do counseling services, a multicultural program, and international student activities through Global Community programming. Faculty and staff development is also fostered via USI employee programs, which accounted for over 1,200 enrollments in 2005-06 through the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and noncredit program fee waivers for employees.

Community concerns are addressed through, for instance, attention to health issues via such projects as the genomics partnership and to social issues such as teen substance abuse through partnerships with the Youth First Foundation. Economic concerns are addressed through two regional economic organizations – QCDC and the Indiana Department of Commerce Region 11 office. Recently, the University has been involved as a participant in the Certified Technology Park in downtown Evansville. Cultural development is the focus of such activities as the New Harmony Theatre, Young Abe Lincoln Outdoor Drama (suspended in 2005), USI Theatre, RopeWalk Writers Retreat, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, public movie series, and guest speakers on campus. The Options program involving the University and Ivy Tech Community College, the College Achievement Program (CAP), and such grant-related programs as Reform of Mathematics and Sciences (ROMS) are examples of the University addressing educational needs.

**5A.4: Outreach programs are responsive to identified community needs.**

Because of the lag in funding from the State, the University's resources for internally funded outreach and engagement activities are limited. Even so, the University targets some State funds to support, at least partially, a wide range of outreach activities. Major projects in this category are Historic Southern Indiana, Historic New Harmony, the Center for Applied Research and Economic Development, Young Abe Lincoln Outdoor Drama (suspended in 2005), and various continuing education programs. It is noteworthy that numerous faculty and staff aggressively pursue grant funds for outreach projects. Examples are Indiana Department of Workforce Development funding for leadership training at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana, and for lean manufacturing process improvement training at five area tool and die companies. Both were developed in response to identified needs and resulted in a Certificate in Technical Achievement (CTA) for participants.

The College of Nursing and Health Professions conducts several outreach programs for underserved populations. Two recent examples include the Witness Project, an initiative to raise awareness of breast and cervical cancer among African American women, thereby lowering rates of mortality and morbidity, and a collaborative nursing practice with the Vanderburgh County Correctional Facilities and ECHO Community Health Care Center. Commenced in September 2000 with a five-year grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Nursing, the program seeks to provide physical exams and screenings for communicable diseases and education programs to the inmates at the jail and community corrections complex. Other primary objectives are to provide nursing and health professions students the opportunity to deliver culturally sensitive health care in a diverse environment; faculty an opportunity to integrate clinical practice and teaching roles; and health care referrals via case management services to the inmates following release. An average of 40 hours per week of healthcare services and educational offerings are provided to the inmates at the county correctional facilities.

In order to meet other needs identified within the region, many of the noncredit programs offered through Extended Services are designed to be self-supporting on a fee-for-service basis.

Although limited, continued increases in the University's budget and intellectual capital have made it possible for the institution to continue to be responsive to the needs of its various constituents. An examination of the scale and scope of outreach activities indicates that to a large extent the University has been receptive to the needs of its constituencies. Between 2000-01 and 2004-05, for example, total annual enrollment in noncredit programs offered by USI increased approximately 30 percent.

**5A. 5: External constituents respond positively to University programs.**

Measures of constituent satisfaction indicate that a significant majority of constituents is very satisfied with the relevance of outreach programs. Overall, the results from a 2004 community survey indicate that the University was rated 4.27 out of 5 for its service and

engagement activities. This was demonstrated in the 2004 focus groups when respondents (with a score of 3.84 out of 5) said USI was fulfilling its service and engagement mission; the results for lifelong learning were 4.15, 3.84 for economic/workforce development, 3.73 for civic/cultural awareness, and 3.51 for the applied research mission.

Participant comments from selected programs show how the University's outreach activities enrich their professional and personal lives:

- The Advanced Manufacturing training, as provided under the leadership of the University of Southern Indiana, was very beneficial to our company. We used this training in three separate departments with each experiencing very positive results in our processes and overall functionality. The teamwork and cohesiveness displayed by the participating employees was incredible. *Rob Voegel, Human Resources Manager, Berry Plastics*
- I have been totally satisfied with my experience at RopeWalk. I've attended the Writer's Conference 3 of the last 4 years, each time with a different instructor, and each time I've come away with new ideas for enhancing and extending my work. One of the things I especially like about the Conference is the openness of faculty, staff, and students. We all learn from one another. Also, the quality of the instructors is exceptional. Some of the country's best writers teach at RopeWalk. It's exhilarating to work with and spend time with writers of such high caliber. I also appreciate the variety of activities; in addition to in-class time, and faculty and student readings, there's plenty of time for one's own writing. I'm so glad I found RopeWalk. It's meant a huge leap in my ability and confidence as a poet. *Lee Rossi, RopeWalk Writers Retreat Participant*
- This was an outstanding Institute, in a beautiful location! The format was really nice, as it gave us time to learn, but also to relax. I think the best part about it is that I think I can take the material and use it, not just file it away as nice to know. Lots of resources. Thanks! *Anonymous Participant, 2003 School Social Work Institute*
- My daughter really enjoyed learning new painting techniques and was proud of the art work she produced. *Parent of participant in Painting Techniques for grades 7-9, 2004.*
- This program has helped the (Alcan) casting maintenance operation to become more effective at doing planned work and getting from a breakdown mode to a planned mode. There is more to do, this is a journey. This program is now becoming a requirement for all Alcan Sebree maintenance professionals. *Rick Feitl – Alcan Aluminum*

Nearly all revenue-generating noncredit programs are developed in response to a need verified by constituent interest. Each participant is asked to evaluate the activity with regard to content and instruction and whether the program met instructional objectives. Overall ratings are consistently high. Examples include:

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- Fall 2004 participants gave an aggregate rating of 4.7 on a 5-point scale to courses in the Certificate in Management program. Evaluations were returned by 80 percent of participants.
- A summer program on childhood development disorders received an overall rating of 3.5 on a 4-point scale with 50 percent of over 100 participants responding.
- Participants in the RopeWalk Writers Retreat frequently get in touch years after attending to share their success stories. Many of these are posted on the [RopeWalk Web site](#).

Participation in University programs offered to external constituents is strong. In the course of a year, over half a million visit the University Center for various programs and activities, 2,500 attend student theater productions, over 19,000 attend performances of New Harmony Theatre and Lincoln Amphitheatre (production suspended in 2005), and more than 52,000 attend athletic events (duplicated head counts).

An examination of outreach activities indicates that there is considerable convergence between the identified educational needs of the community and the variety of programs offered to external constituencies.

***Core Component 5.B: USI has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.***

The University of Southern Indiana strives to serve constituencies effectively by creating connections with them. It also serves as a resource for area citizens to develop relationships that strengthen the region. Students, staff, administrators, and faculty pride themselves on developing curricular activities that nurture engagement and community partnerships. USI supports these commitments through physical, human, and financial resources, and ongoing programs of engagement and service.

**5B.1: The University possesses structures and processes that enable effective connections with its communities.**

Strong connections with local, regional, state, and national groups have been central to the mission of the University since its inception.

*A comprehensive institution located in a three-state region, the special emphasis USI places on those organizations whose vision and mission will be enhanced through partnerships with the University makes it a **Connected and Distinctive Organization**.*

In keeping with its mission, the primary focus of the University is on undergraduate education. Even though limited human and fiscal resources constrain opportunities for outreach activities -- for example, the typical faculty teaching load of 12 hours per semester limits faculty availability -- USI has organized to promote outreach and engagement. Although engagement activities are expected of all academic units, the

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central focus of outreach at USI is through the Division of Extended Services. Extended Services manages a wide variety of outreach programs and projects that are initiated within the unit as well as those offered in cooperation with USI colleges and departments, community partners, regional agencies, and K-12 institutions. The unit is organized to facilitate faculty and departmental involvement in outreach, to promote interdisciplinary initiatives, and to develop funding to support these activities.

Examples of formal arrangements between Extended Services and other academic units to provide engagement activities include the annual case management conference with the College of Nursing and Health Professions, the School Social Work Institute with the Department of Social Work, and the Becker Conviser CPA Review program with the College of Business. Many engagement activities are based within academic departments or originate with individual faculty or groups of faculty and students as service learning projects.

Key components of the University have outreach and engagement missions. The mission of Extended Services, for example, is to extend the resources of the University through education and training programs, assessment activities, consulting, and related services that assist in the educational, human resource, and economic development of our communities.

Extended Services engages in three forms of activity: Academic and Community Outreach, Professional Development and Business Services, and Regional Heritage Development.

Academic and Community Outreach. Extended Services brings college courses to the places where citizens live, work, or go to school. They meet needs by supporting individuals of all ages through noncredit programs, online learning opportunities (such as through USI Distance Education), off-campus courses (such as through the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System), and continuing education for various professions. Extended Services also serves USI colleges and departments by providing expert services in planning and implementing outreach efforts.

Professional Development and Business Services. Extended Services provides the region's manufacturing, service, and health care organizations performance-improvement services, including organizational assessment, on-site customized training, and business consulting (through the Organization and Professional Development Group). As a strong link that creates a culture of service in supporting the requests of area partners, Extended Services serves the common good of our community. Extended Services played a prominent part in the creation of the Quad Counties Development Commission (described in 5A.1).

Regional Heritage Development. Extended Services also serves our communities through economic and educational development initiatives, tourism programs, and cultural outreach. For example, [Historic Southern Indiana](#) (HSI) is a regional

development program dedicated to preserving, enhancing, and promoting regional resources. HSI hosts workshops, produces publications, conducts visitor research, works with K-12 educators, and facilitates and coordinates the work of many groups and agencies interested in the enhancement of regional identity and pride. In addition to a wealth of historic sites and communities, the area boasts forests, caves, rivers, and lakes that offer scenic beauty and recreational activities.

The varied activities and programs conducted by Extended Services are evident, for example, in:

- The Bachelor of General Studies program and numerous certificate programs
- Partnership with the National Association of Purchasing Management and the Tri-State World Trade Council (through 2005)
- Partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, and the Evansville Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce in conducting a study to identify future training needs for area industries and how these companies are faring in the competitive global marketplace
- Historic Southern Indiana's development and continued support of two scenic byway projects, the Ohio River Scenic Byway (OSOR), recognized by the Federal Highway Administration in 1996, and Indiana's Historic Pathways (IHP), made a state byway in 2004; its collaboration with the Southern Indiana and South Central Indiana tourism cooperatives; and its organization and leadership of task forces in Indiana and the "Lincoln States" that are planning for the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 2009. In the former, collaboration with Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and the Indiana Department of Commerce was critical. Development of the ORSR, moreover, led to the creation of IHP. In the latter, Historic Southern Indiana has worked closely with the Lincoln Museum, the Indiana Historical Society, and the three Lincoln parks (Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois) in the National Park Service
- Connect with Southern Indiana, a new program in 2005, is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment to boost Indiana's retention of intellectual capital. Its purpose is nurturing citizenship to enhance the quality of life in the region. At the heart of the program is strengthening critical thinking—helping participants learn about and strengthen their skills, their options, and their opportunities for involvement in community and regional projects

**5B.2: Co-curricular activities engage students, staff, administrators, and faculty with USI's external communities.**

The University of Southern Indiana develops co-curricular activities that support portions of academic courses. In addition to the numerous community service and service-learning projects that exist throughout the five academic colleges, other collaborative projects permit the students to take part as spectators or recipients of learning related to their coursework.

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[Cooperative Professional Practice Program](#). The Cooperative Professional Practice Program (Co-op) offers a unique opportunity for students to integrate classroom learning with career-related work experience in both the public and private sector. Career Services and Placement provides a free intern/co-op job posting service, available to current students, alumni, and employers. The co-op program offers two distinctly different patterns of study and work: alternate and parallel. The alternate pattern requires students to alternate semesters of full-time work with semesters of full-time study. The parallel pattern offers part-time work experience over an extended period of time while the student maintains a minimum academic load. Career Services also provides several job fairs throughout the school year, and also hosts a career fair annually.

### **5B.3: Educational programs connect students, staff, administrators, and faculty with USI's external communities.**

Each facet of the University creates educational programs that connect students, staff, administrators, and faculty with USI's external communities. Colleges of the University generally possess mission statements that challenge faculty to engage with area partners and create outreach activities and programs that respond to the needs of the community. Most of these programs require direct engagement with constituents either as presenters or audience members. Many programs receive support from public granting agencies and could not function without the direct involvement by the public and advisory groups.

In the English Department for example, the RopeWalk Reading Series and Writers Retreat provide a variety of opportunities for the engagement of the public. It is in its eighteenth year of operation and plans a twentieth anniversary anthology of works. The Reading Series presents readings throughout the year by local, regional, and nationally acclaimed authors, free to the public. The reading program has grown to include four sessions each semester with 100-150 people attending each session. The RopeWalk Writers Retreat conducts workshops by established authors in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction for those wanting to develop their writing skills. RopeWalk workshops involve up to 60 participants a year in the original summer retreat and a winter weekend, added in 2001, because of popular demand.

Examples from the College of Business include undergraduate courses such as Small Business Consulting and Applied Software Development and MBA courses such as Leadership Skills which engage students in problem-solving activities involving organizations and businesses in the University's service area.

*The College of Liberal Arts supports two strong theatre programs; the New Harmony Theatre and the University of Southern Indiana Theatre. The New Harmony Theatre is a summer professional theatre fostering cultural development in Southern Indiana by conducting national searches for theatre professionals. Such projects reveal USI to be a **Distinctive and Connected Organization***

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Other programs across the University that engage and support constituents include the Center for Economic Education sponsored by the College of Business. The center promotes finance and economic education in elementary and secondary schools. From the Department of Teacher Education, The Elementary Transition to Teaching Partnership program works with local school administrators to encourage individuals in developing their skills in elementary teaching. This year, the College of Nursing and Health Professions co-sponsored the eighth annual Advanced Practice Nursing Symposium for area nursing professionals to strengthen their skills. An outgrowth of the symposium has produced a new service this past year, the first annual Pharmacological Update for Advanced Practice Nurses. Also, the Department of Social Work sponsored the fourth annual Social Work Festival bringing social service agencies together with students and social work professionals.

Another educational strategy that connects USI with external communities is Research, Innovation, Scholarship, and Creativity (RISC), hosted by USI's Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. The program encourages, supports, and publicizes undergraduate research, innovation, scholarship, and creativity. RISC grants, which are competitive, provide modest funding to initiate or continue qualifying projects. Students applying for funds under this program work closely with a faculty sponsor. The [RISC Showcase](#) is a symposium that allows undergraduates of all disciplines to present, demonstrate, or display their academic works to fellow students, faculty members, and the public. This occurs each spring and features a prominent keynote speaker. RISC serves as a clearinghouse for information on projects being conducted at USI as well as research opportunities off campus. A similar program is being developed for graduate students. Additional information about RISC may be found in 4A and 4C.5.

### **The University's resources support effective programs of engagement and service.**

USI devotes resources to support strong programs of engagement and service. A faculty committee for service learning improves engagement and outreach efforts of students and faculty through relationships with local and regional not-for-profit partners. The University also is an active partner with the Indiana Campus Compact, a consortium of colleges, both public and private, seeking to cultivate in students a lifelong commitment to community service.

Dr. Edward Zlotkowski, senior associate for Service-Learning Projects at the American Association for Higher Education, was the featured speaker at the fall faculty and administrative staff meeting in 2002. "Higher Education as a Public Good: Reclaiming the Tradition" was the topic of his presentation. As a senior faculty fellow at Campus Compact, he has worked to create professional development opportunities in service learning for provosts and deans as well as a series of summer institutes for engaged academic departments. Workshops on engagement and service have been held over the past two years that have built on his challenge to the institution.

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#### **5B.4: Ongoing engagement and service are incorporated into planning processes.**

Service and engagement are incorporated into the planning process at USI. Each year, the five colleges are expected to report on faculty engagement and service activities to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. Several University committees nurture engagement activities at USI and throughout the Tri-State region (including the Academic Planning Council, Academic Affairs Council, Development Council, and University Honors Council). Service learning is encouraged as part of curriculum development. A service learning fellow position was created in 2003 through the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence.

The University has encouraged engagement and service through funding of RISC programming, the Teaching Enhancement Awards (through the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence), and the Faculty Research and Creative Works Awards. Individual Colleges also do their part to develop strong partnership programs between faculty and community.

*Each facet of the University—a **Connected Organization**--creates educational programs that connect students, staff, administrators, and faculty with USI's external communities.*

#### **Core Component 5C: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to the constituencies that depend on it for service.**

*The Latin inscription on the Seal of the University--**Academia Populi, Academia Populo**—education by the people, for the people--describes USI's relationship with the community that created and supports it, a **Distinctive Organization**.*

The University of Southern Indiana exists because of constituent interests and support. Founded by a coalition of community leaders, it makes service to constituents central to its mission. The rapid growth of the University has meant that the definition of constituency is continually expanding. That presents challenges: recognizing new constituencies and their needs, matching those needs to USI's mission, and in allocating limited resources to meet those needs.

#### **5C.1: Collaborations, partnerships, and programs facilitate the mobility of learners and access to degree programs.**

USI recognizes that the student who attends only one college from ages 18-22 is increasingly rare. Consequently, it has developed policies and processes to respond to the needs of students of all kinds. Our transfer policies are consistent with those of most universities, allowing students to maximize their previous coursework. An [online transfer evaluation service](#) allows prospective transfer students to get a quick idea of how their credits will transfer. The [Bachelor of General Studies](#) (BGS), a degree-completion program for working adults, provides an excellent opportunity to combine previous courses, wherever taken, with life experiences and technical certificates to customize the

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degree that best meets a student's educational goals while minimizing additional required coursework. Regionally-accredited associate degree programs may be recognized as a 36-hour block of credit in the BGS.

USI participates in several partnerships with other institutions. These include articulation agreements such as those in computer programming, graphic design, and nursing with IVY Tech Community College. USI is an active member of the Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education (IPSE), an organization within the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System (IHETS), which plans and implements e-learning and related initiatives and services. One or more delegates from each IHETS member institution serves on the committee, along with representatives from the public library community, K-12 education, public broadcasting, and other educational service providers. Courses offered via distance modalities comprise an important feature of IPSE programs.

The evolution of distance education at USI highlights its commitment to providing access and willingness to engage in partnerships and collaborative efforts. As a result of these steps, the number of distance education course offerings has increased from 187 in 2000-2001 to 338 in 2005-2006, and enrollments have increased from 3,554 to 7,477 in the same period.

USI offers two plans allowing residents of selected counties in Kentucky and Illinois to attend at a reduced tuition rate. An agreement between the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and the Kentucky Council on Higher Education permits residents of four border counties in Kentucky to attend USI at in-state tuition rates (both graduate and undergraduate). A non-resident grant program lowering tuition rates is available to qualifying students in nine additional Kentucky counties and 26 counties in Illinois.

The [College Achievement Program](#) (CAP) is USI's dual credit program. Seventeen courses (a total of 70 sections) are offered at 14 high schools for 2005-2006 with approximately 450 students enrolled. CAP courses are taught by specially trained high school teachers who have adjunct faculty status at USI. CAP students pay a reduced tuition. Courses taken through CAP are accepted by most colleges and universities, although students are advised to check with their preferred schools for precise information. Since 2002, 990 students have enrolled in CAP and 366 of them have later enrolled at USI (37 percent). (Since fall 1996, 1,105 of the 2,499 students enrolled in USI's College Achievement Program, or 44.2 percent, enrolled at USI as on-campus students.)

Two USI programs serve K-12 schools in other ways. The Transition to Teaching program is a cooperative effort between the USI Department of Teacher Education and the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation. The purpose of the partnership is to recruit highly qualified individuals with bachelor's degrees and at least two years of career experience to the teaching profession. Although program requirements and procedures vary somewhat for elementary and secondary licensure, both tracks require a one-year, full-time course/field experience sequence.

The Teacher in Residence program annually recruits one highly qualified area teacher to serve a one-year appointment to the USI teacher education faculty. The value of the program is in the exposure of students to a teacher with current K-12 experience, the opportunity for USI faculty to connect with a K-12 teaching colleague, and the increased knowledge of USI and its programs gathered by the teacher.

**5C.2: Community leaders comment on USI engagement activities.**

- “The Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation has a strong working relationship with the University of Southern Indiana. They collaborate at many levels. An example of one collaborative activity: The EVSC is currently planning their third annual Back to School workshop at USI in August 2006. Over 300 teachers from throughout the school district attend this workshop and receive professional development from experts all across the nation. USI provides technical support and expertise by hosting this workshop.” *Cathlin Gray, EVSC Assistant Superintendent*
- “The University’s willingness to seek out regional needs and to develop courses, programs, and services to meet those needs has made USI a valuable partner in economic development. . . The University provides management support for key regional organizations such as the Tri-State World Trade Council and the Southwestern Indiana Regional Development Commission; it also hosts the Region 11 office of the Indiana Department of Commerce. Faculty, staff, and students at the University are broadly engaged in many aspects of regional development.” *Ken Robinson, President, Vision-e*
- “The availability of professional nurses is an important element in providing high quality health care for individuals in our community and throughout Indiana. The University of Southern Indiana’s second degree Accelerated Baccalaureate Nursing Education program will help address the nursing shortage in southwestern Indiana and contribute to the availability of needed nursing care in our hospitals and community.” *Linda White, President and CEO, Deaconess Hospital*
- “The University of Southern Indiana’s new [Accelerated Baccalaureate Nursing Education] program is an excellent example of responsiveness to southwestern Indiana’s growing nursing needs.” *Shiela Clark, CNO/Vice President of Patient Services, St. Joseph’s Hospital, Huntingburg*
- “The University of Southern Indiana is a vital player in southern Indiana’s economy, working to meet the needs of regional employers and facilitating the work of our economic development specialists. There is no question that our major employers depend heavily on the University to produce capable graduates who can sustain the success of their organizations.” *John Dunn, President, Dunn Hospitality Group Ltd.*
- “In 2003, PPG Evansville established a Team Leader role across its production areas. Through the services of USI, we were able to develop and deliver a focused training program to meet the needs of the employees appointed to these new positions. In addition to running the program, USI

played a key role in obtaining funding for this training from the State of Indiana.” *Steven Harmon, Director of Human Resources, PPG-Evansville*

- “We feel so fortunate to be a beneficiary of the USI Internship Program. We have had some excellent students, some of which we have since hired.” *Kathy Schoettlin, Director of Public Relations/Disaster Services, Southwestern Indiana Chapter American Red Cross*
- “My participation in the Tri-State World Trade Council has borne fruit. I met someone from a freight forwarder at a meeting a couple of months ago. The company she works for will be sending our gas filters to Bangladesh.” *Madonna Yancey, co-owner of King Mechanical Specialty, a small business in Newburgh, referring to the Tri-State World Trade Council.*

### **5C.3: USI programs build bridges among diverse communities.**

The community served by the University of Southern Indiana, although demographically less diverse than those in some geographic locations, comprises persons of many different backgrounds—nationality, race, age, and class, as well as urban, suburban, and rural populations. It serves those seeking graduate degrees, undergraduates who are the first in their families to attend college, professionals in need of continuing education, displaced workers in need of retraining, those with disabilities, and businesses and organizations in need of training to improve their competitive positions.

*An evidence of USI as a **Connected Organization** is seen each February when the USI International Club sponsors an International Food Expo as part of International Week. In 2006 approximately 650, including many from the surrounding community, enjoyed foods and entertainment representing 18 countries. Off-campus groups such as N’Vision (African drumming), Friends to Internationals, and Beyond the Pale (Celtic music) participate along with numerous campus organizations and groups from area schools.*

USI meets these diverse needs through programs including:

- A partnership with [English as a Second Language International](#) (ESLI) makes it possible for international students to succeed in American higher education.
- USI’s International Studies programs helps students broaden their horizons through study abroad programs and recruits international students to USI.
- Global Communities is a living-learning program that mixes U.S. and international students in USI residence halls through educational and social events. Some Global Communities events are open to the general public.
- The USI Multicultural Center exists to foster and provide a supportive and inclusive environment for diverse populations at USI; encourage, promote, and assist the academic and social integration of underrepresented students into the University through programs and services offered by the center and through partnerships with other campus entities; create opportunities for cultural interaction between students, the campus, and the community at large to promote cultural awareness and sensitivity; and provide outreach opportunities to underrepresented groups and underserved communities to seek higher education.

- THREADS (Teaching Human Respect and Encouraging Diversity Series) is an initiative to deliver diversity programming to the campus and tri-state through a coordinated calendar. THREADS promotes activities, events, and programs sponsored by a wide variety of USI entities.
- The special needs of our older population are addressed through USI's participation in the Elderhostel program, noncredit courses delivered at a retirement community adjoining the USI campus, a "one course" program for retired individuals making their first USI credit course available at a charge of \$25, plus incidental fees, and gerontology outreach programs administered by the College of Nursing and Health Professions.
- Students with special needs are served through the USI Counseling Center, both through assistance to the student and through consulting services to faculty and staff who serve these students.
- The Epi-Hab Center for Disability Studies is funded by an endowment established when a local sheltered workshop organization decided it no longer served the needs of the disabled community as well as more mainstream efforts. The endowment provides for six annual \$1,000 scholarships for students with a commitment to serving the disabled. The center also sponsors disability awareness programs. When funding levels warrant, faculty and student research may also be funded.
- USI administers the local Japanese School attended by the children of Japanese citizens working for area businesses.
- [Historic New Harmony](#), a heritage tourism outreach program, conducts many events for diverse populations throughout the year. One of the best attended is the annual Heritage Week for elementary students, bringing in 5,000 third- and fourth-grade students to experience frontier life in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **5C.4: USI maintains partnerships to achieve educational, economic, and social goals.**

Beyond the many partnerships and cooperative programs described above, USI works with its constituents in the following ways:

- Both the College of Nursing and Health Professions and the Social Work Department have active agreements with hospitals and social service agencies that provide student field experience and clinical placements and internships.
- USI Career Services coordinates internships and co-op programs for USI students in local organizations.
- Faculty in the Department of Teacher Education provide a variety of professional development services to teachers in area schools.
- The Quad County Development Commission (QCDC) is housed by the University and supported extensively through the resources of Extended Services. USI has been instrumental in the creation of the organization and is committed to serving as an incubator as long as necessary.
- USI is a founding partner of the Downtown Digital Zone/Certified Technology Park. Other partners include Vision-e, Evansville's economic development

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organization; Vectren Source, the local public gas utility; the City of Evansville; and the State of Indiana.

- The Region 11 office of the Indiana Department of Commerce is housed on the USI campus.
- USI was a partner in the creation and implementation of the Signature Learning Center, a downtown high school facility with space for college courses offered by USI and others.
- USI Extended Services cooperates with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development to provide training for area workers.
- Historic New Harmony is a unified program of USI and the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites Division of the Department of Natural Resources. The New Harmony Institute for Community was created by HNH in partnership with community leaders to increase the use of New Harmony as an educational resource for the area and as a destination for tourists. The educational, cultural, and historic resources of the living community cannot be overemphasized. USI has just begun to scratch the surface of its possibilities.
- Historic Southern Indiana is a collaborative project serving the 26 counties of southern Indiana in heritage tourism, history education and interpretation, and corridor development.
- USI is an active participant in the Southern Indiana Rural Development Project, an economic development effort encompassing 34 counties—roughly the southern third of Indiana.

*USI as a **Distinctive Organization** that promotes outreach and engagement is evident in many ways, notably its unified program in New Harmony, begun in 1985, and Historic Southern Indiana, initiated a year later.*

### **5C.5: USI's partnerships and contractual arrangements uphold its integrity.**

Integrity has two meanings—adherence to a set of standards or ethics, and the quality of being whole or undivided. USI's partnerships and relationships reflect both of these kinds of integrity. The first is demonstrated by the nature of our partners—organizations and agencies of the highest caliber whose missions and goals are congruent with those of the University. Integrity of the first kind is also demonstrated by selecting partnerships that uphold the University's mission and that do not unduly task its resources or become a hindrance to meeting the central goals of the mission.

Integrity of the second kind is a bit harder to measure and, as the University grows and becomes more and more diverse, harder to maintain. A major challenge for any large organization is to develop a very high level of internal communication that encourages collaboration and stops various departments from duplicating efforts or working at cross purposes.

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**Core Component 5D: *Internal and external constituencies value the services that USI provides.***

The University of Southern Indiana serves a number of diverse constituencies and is accountable and responsive to the various needs of its constituents. Its accountability can be appraised in the depth and breadth of service provided by faculty and staff, cooperative partnerships with business and industry, University participation and leadership on issues of economic and workforce development, aiding social service agencies, strengthening K-12 educational systems, and providing an array of programs in the arts and humanities.

**5D.1: Evaluations Involve the Served Constituencies**

An assortment of external evaluation processes charts the University's service to the community and the value of these services. The 2004 HLC Self-Study included focus groups from community representatives, faculty, administration, support staff, and students to determine the fulfillment of the University's mission. Recent community responses rated the University high for service and engagement (4.27 percent out of 5).

Internal constituency evaluations include student evaluations of teaching, online institute evaluations, student advising surveys, Freshman Year Experience surveys, survey of student engagement, graduation follow-up surveys, alumni surveys, and Center for Teaching and Learning Effectiveness Faculty Workshop surveys. Faculty have a formal annual review process they follow to achieve tenure, promotion, and reappointment. An element of the review entails that faculty share their academic expertise to benefit the community. Surveys of the educational and personal growth of students indicate that the University is preparing students for the workplace, continued academic pursuits, and life beyond the college campus. Responses to the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE) in 2003 indicate students maintain high levels of satisfaction in selected aspects of the University environment. Alumni responses to a 2004 alumni survey indicated that 98.1 percent were satisfied that USI was achieving its mission. These findings confirm the emphasis on high quality undergraduate instruction which is central to the mission of USI.

External formal advisory boards comprised of community leaders and USI graduates review academic programming to anticipate the needs of the changing economy. Examples of advisory boards are the Board of Advisors and the Accounting Circle for the College of Business and the Engineering Advisory Board for the College of Science and Engineering. For example, the Accounting Circle, comprised of 20 professionals from public accounting and industry, has developed two standing committees; the Practice/Education Interaction Committee and the Curriculum Committee to assess the undergraduate and graduate programs in accounting and business law.

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## **5D.2: Service and Volunteer Programs Well-Received**

*Centralized volunteer management is an innovative concept for higher education. Since July 1996, over 3,600 volunteers have given a total of 812,235 hours to benefit USI and the community. Calculated at the national volunteer wage, this amounts to over \$13 million in service and savings to the University, a **Distinctive Organization**, and the community.*

Volunteer USI, a centralized University-wide volunteer management program, coordinates students, alumni, and community individuals who wish to share their time and skills to benefit the University, its outreach programs, and the Evansville community. The work of volunteers provides immeasurable value to USI by linking the resources of the community and the University. Volunteer USI has partnered with the United Way of Southwestern Indiana to create the Student Volunteer Project to assist multiple community organizations and events. In December 2004, Volunteer USI was honored with the Volunteer Engagement Gold Award from the District V Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

Given the University's mission as an institution characterized by excellence in teaching and regional outreach, faculty embrace service learning as an important vehicle for instructional effectiveness and curricular currency. Numerous faculty and student outreach service learning projects benefit the community. Dr. Michael Slavkin, assistant professor of education, has donated many hours in the past three years to the Stanley Hall Enrichment Center. Slavkin is the volunteer service learning coordinator for the enrichment center, where he developed an extensive mentoring program, conferred with students and teachers, and monitored community projects involving both Stanley Hall and USI students. Another campus service-learning project secured a grant for the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ohio Valley *Around the World in 80 Bites*. Other examples can be found in the appendices.

University partnerships with state and regional agencies and other organizations in providing selected outreach initiatives also promote the state's interest in economic development, international trade, tourism development, and regional leadership development.

For example, the College of Business Center for Business and Economic Research produces the Evansville Fact Book, a report of economic indicators for the region, and produces cost-of-living indices for rural counties in southwest Indiana. It also conducts a quarterly Business Conditions and Outlook Survey that provides information about business plans for hiring, capital expenditures, and selling prices of firms located in the Evansville area.

Service partnerships with local health providers, including the region's two largest health care centers (Deaconess and St. Mary's), make possible clinical placements in the nursing and health professions. In addition, the College of Nursing and Health Professions has numerous community outreach initiatives including breast health screenings and

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education for African American women, Community First Health Fair, dental services for Impact Dental Clinic, and health assessments for incarcerated females and juvenile males.

Local organizations utilize the online USI [faculty/staff](#) and [alumni](#) speakers bureaus. Faculty, staff, and alumni share their expertise by volunteering as community speakers for area programs and meetings. Journalists use faculty experts as knowledgeable resources.

### **5D. 3: Evidence of Value of Economic and Workforce Development Activities to Community**

Throughout its history, USI has been actively engaged in addressing issues in economic and workforce development. There is a consistent record of development and expansion of programs and services in response to or anticipation of needs of the changing economy. This is demonstrated by the institutional focus on increasing access to higher education for traditional and nontraditional students, development and expansion of educational programs and services to address traditional workforce concerns and new economy requirements, and retention of Hoosier students.

A task force in 1999-2000 studied economic and workforce trends in the service region and recommended new or revised curricular offerings to address identified needs. Over the past four years, the findings of the task force resulted in the creation of 13 new USI academic programs to address educational needs of the new economy: high-skill/high-wage employment, technical and specialty programs, initiatives that promote better communication, problem-solving, and team-building skills in all curricular areas. Significant changes in programming include:

- New programs focusing on high skills or technology-related professions including bachelor's degrees in engineering, applied computer science, and e-commerce and post-baccalaureate certificates in accounting and information technology.
- A revised adult degree-completion program that facilitates articulation with two-year colleges and provides opportunities for adults who "stopped out" to pursue employment or family responsibilities, the Bachelor of General Studies degree is increasingly popular among those 25 and older.
- Additional degree programs designed to meet specific state and regional needs are a principal's licensure program, bachelor's degrees in early childhood education and special education, and master's degrees in public administration, health services administration, and occupational therapy.
- Distance education capabilities were expanded to support increased access for adults, incumbent workers, and others with limited access to degree programs or training opportunities. The University has developed, or is in the process of implementing, the following programs in at least a partially distance-distributed delivery format: the Bachelor of Science in Nursing completion degree, the Bachelor of General Studies, and master's degree programs in Nursing, Health Services Administration, Occupational Therapy, Business Administration, and

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Industrial Management. Support for instructional design and delivery via telecommunications was significantly expanded to assist faculty in use of instructional technology.

- New programs to be implemented in the next biennium include a Bachelor of Science in Manufacturing Technology and a time-shortened Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Another University initiative that resulted from the needs/trends identified through the task force and other studies was renewed emphasis on outreach to regional employers and state workforce development agencies. More emphasis was placed on consulting and assessment activities that resulted in long-term relationships and more consistent workforce improvement.

*The 1999-2000 task force earned recognition for diversity and community-wide collaboration as one of three components of Evansville's designation as a 2004 All-America City from the National Civic League. USI is a particularly well-Connected Organization.*

Other collaborative programs include the Digital Downtown Project, Historic New Harmony-New Harmony Institute, Historic Southern Indiana, and management support for the Quad Counties Development Commission and Region 11 Indiana Department of Commerce.

#### **5D.4: Constituents Participate in Activities/Co-Curricular Programs**

As noted earlier, in 2001 the University created the Research, Innovation, Scholarship, and Creativity Program (RISC) to support additional learning opportunities for undergraduate students.

Students have the opportunity to participate in a broad range of organizations and activities to practice what they learn in the classroom. These organizations and activities provide students with an avenue to develop skills and to explore new interests and ideas. From orientation through graduation, students are challenged to step outside the classroom to develop and become contributing members of society. Over 90 student organizations address the following areas: academic, professional, honorary, multicultural, political, religious, service, special interest, and club sports.

The University has created numerous additional opportunities for students to be active participants or spectators in artistic, cultural, philanthropic, and community-based activities. Some of these activities and programs include:

- Fall Student Leadership Conference allows students in campus leadership positions to develop both personal and organizational leadership skills.
- Leadership USI is a workshop that focuses on the growth and development of the individual student.

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- Corporate Leadership Conferences, a collaborative program with local business or corporation, provides an opportunity for students to interact and network with business leaders to learn about corporate leadership development initiatives.
- International Programs and Services office coordinates the Study Abroad program in over 100 institutions in 50 countries. Freshman students may reside on the Global Community Theme Floor in Governors Hall, where weekly programs are offered that provide a diverse view of different countries, cultures, and customs.
- Multicultural Center activities for students include the Teaching Human Respect & Encouraging Action Diversity Series (THREADS), College Mentors for Kids, and Designed by Grace Gospel choir.
- Theatre and musical productions are offered on- and off-campus at the USI Theatre, the New Harmony Theatre, and the Lincoln Amphitheatre (suspended in 2005).
- New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art exhibits contemporary art created by artists of the Midwest.

Community entities also support USI's intercollegiate athletics program. In turn, student athletes engage in a variety of community service activities from reading to elementary school students to visiting children in hospitals. The Eagle Math program, initiated in 1997, is a national model of a program to encourage young students in local schools to improve their math skills.

#### **5D.5: Facilities Available to and Used by Community**

Community individuals and organizations often use campus facilities for the purpose of meetings, programs, services, and instruction. USI facilities that are scheduled include classrooms, conference rooms, distance education facilities and video conferencing, residence halls, dining facilities, Children's Center, indoor swimming pool, athletic fields, and an outdoor education center. From July 2003 to June 2004 over 564,000 used the University Center facilities, including food service and meeting rooms. For July 2004 to June 2005 the number increased to nearly 668,000 and for the nine-month period from July 2005 through May 2006 the number is more than 700,000.

Recent organizations using campus facilities in partnership with campus organizations and programs include Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Mid-America Undergraduate Psychology Research, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Evansville Catholic Diocese, Leadership Evansville, Deaconess Hospital, Alzheimer Association Memory Walk, Keep Evansville Beautiful Tour de Bloom bicycle ride, Southwest Indiana Regional Council on Aging Senior Olympics, and Albion Fellows Bacon Center (battered women's shelter).

Many community relationships and collaborative programs have developed through the usage of USI facilities. The Interview Workshop for high school business students, the Foreign Language Academic Bowl high school competitions, and Mole Day Chemistry Bowl high school team competitions and chemistry demonstrations are co-sponsored on campus with the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation. Summer camps for high

school students held on campus include the following: The Indiana Association of School Principals department of student programs Indiana Cheer Camp, University Dance Association Dance Camp, Indiana State Police Respect for Law Camp, Youth Resources Teenpower Camp, and the National Association of Christian Campus Ministries Student Leadership Conference.

#### **5D.6: Programs Meet Continuing Education Needs of Professionals**

The University continues to provide a wide range of non-degree programming in the form of workshops, training programs, on-site delivery, and seminars designed to respond to business and industrial needs. Of the more than 10,000 people who enroll annually in noncredit courses, more than 7,000 participate in education and training programs provided by USI's Organizational and Professional Development Group. Continuing education is available for many professions including registered nurses, health facility administrators, dentists, dental hygienists, and licensed social workers in Indiana.

Emphasis has been placed on consulting and assessment activities that result in long-term relationships and more consistent workforce improvement programs. Partnerships with businesses, industries, and other southwest Indiana employers have taken the form of customized credit programs, instruction delivered on-site and by distance education, contract training programs, continuing education programs related to employee development, faculty consulting, and applied research projects. Examples of recent and on-going projects include:

- For the past five years, USI has provided leadership training programs for Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana, utilizing Carl Perkins grant funds.
- The Department of Engineering, the College of Business, and Extended Services customized the Master of Science in Industrial Management as an on-site program for area organizations, with courses meeting at times and in formats to accommodate the schedules of employees.
- A long-term employee development program at Rockport Roll Shop, an on-site vendor for AK Steel, provides courses in quality attainment and leadership and professional development.
- USI Extended Services recently entered into an agreement with an area Ford Motor Company distribution center to provide continuing education courses of all kinds for their employees through an on-site employee development center.
- A partnership with a regional CPA firm resulted in the development of a certificate program in Maintenance Management.
- A grant provides training and applied application of lean manufacturing to seven regional companies: Berry Plastics, PPG, General Tool and Die, Fisher Tool, Industrial Tool and Die, Dextrous Tool and Die, and Evansville Tool and Die.
- Extended Services staff designed a long-term leadership development initiative for Kimball International.
- BWX Technologies and Stewart Warner, two military suppliers in southern Indiana, utilize Extended Services' training through licensed programs such as

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- Development Dimensions International (DDI) and the University's partnership with the local section of the American Society of Quality.
- Other companies for which educational and training programs and services are supplied include ALCOA, Anchor Industries, Berry Plastics, Bristol Myers-Squibb, Gibbs Die Casting, Guardian Automotive, PPG, and West Pharmaceuticals.

The USI Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence promotes effective teaching, supports continued faculty development, and facilitates efforts to provide effective learning experiences for students. The Institute for Online Teaching and Learning provides intensive faculty training for effective teaching and learning techniques using technology.

### **Summary**

USI engages its constituencies through programs and services connected to the mission of the institution. Service and engagement are inseparable from teaching and learning on campus and enhance the quality of life in the areas served by the University. Constituents benefit from University programs and services in its five colleges, its Extended Services division, and its athletics program. The University shares its intellectual resources by inviting people to attend programs on campus and by engaging its faculty in a wealth of off-campus programs.

USI's professional development programs are heavily and widely used. Activities that engage professional constituencies also benefit USI students by offering training and real-world experience.

USI recognizes the importance of creating and nurturing connections between internal and external constituents. Establishing commitments that are consistent with the University's mission and that are supported with available resources builds long-lasting collaborations that both partners value.

### **Strengths**

The University's mission clearly articulates a commitment to service and engagement.

Constituents value the service and engagement aspects of that mission. They have a distinct sense of ownership and pride in the institution. Measures of constituent satisfaction indicate that a significant majority of constituents is very satisfied with the relevance of outreach programs. An examination of outreach activities indicates that there is considerable convergence between the identified educational needs of the community and the variety of programs offered to external constituencies.

Service and engagement activities serve an integrative role within the University, providing an opportunity for coordination across the curriculum, as well as with the external community, allowing opportunities for being responsive to needs and changes.

## **Challenges**

Although both structured and informal mechanisms exist for determining the expectations and needs of constituencies, there appears to be some need to address the regularity with which the University identifies changing patterns in expectations and needs of its constituencies for its educational programs.

The level of financial support for engagement and service has grown annually, but the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is aware that faculty involvement needs to be enhanced. Many faculty do not consider this having the same level of importance as teaching and research. During the past year, through several retreats, the provost has encouraged deans, directors, and department chairs to revisit the scholarship of engagement. Moreover, the University was recently awarded a \$2 million grant from the Lilly Endowment that will, among other things, support faculty sabbaticals that foster community outreach.

Faculty involvement in service and engagement needs to be more clearly integrated into the faculty reward/assessment process, so that this is not seen as distinct from teaching and scholarship.

The extensive use we make of adjunct faculty, particularly those with a unique expertise or placement in the community, is a mixed blessing. It can be a positive means of engagement, but also an obstacle to the University's goal of offering as many of its classes as possible through full-time faculty.

As USI grows and becomes more complex, the challenges of maintaining the very high levels of internal communication needed for maximum institutional integrity are also more complex. As a relatively young institution we are fortunate to have many long-term faculty and staff who bear the institutional memory and who are constantly stimulated by the attitudes of younger faculty with diverse areas of interest.

Engagement and service activities at the University of Southern Indiana continue to evolve and expand. There is a definite need for identifying, coordinating, encouraging and assessing these activities through a central office on campus. The challenge becomes one of matching the University's available resources to selected outreach activities consistent with the University mission.

## **Opportunities**

The recent creation of a Center for Applied Research and Economic Development and a Center for Academic Outreach will permit the institution to respond to many of the challenges outlined above. Further, the Connect with Southern Indiana program, funded through the Lilly Endowment, was launched in 2005. This program brings incipient leaders from an nine-county region together in monthly sessions designed to increase

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their critical thinking and other leadership skills and build their potential for community involvement.

The University has been slow to engage the regional issues of the rapidly growing Hispanic population, the serious literacy problem among adults, and the educational preparedness of at-risk youth. USI is, however, exploring ways to collaborate with area organizations that have provided leadership in seeking to address these problems. Although USI may direct resources on some aspects of these problems, it prefers to seek partnerships with organizations already engaged in leadership roles in seeking to address the problems rather than to develop new initiatives under University leadership.