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Conceptualizing the University-Community Connection

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MORRIS

Center for Small Towns



*"BELIEVING IN A BRIGHT, PROSPEROUS
FUTURE FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES."*

Conceptualizing the University- Community Connection

The University of Minnesota Extension Service –
University of Minnesota, Morris Model

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COMMUNITY RESEARCH REPORT 2003-04

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CENTER FOR SMALL TOWNS

The mission of the Center for Small Towns is to focus the University's attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota's small towns with locally identified issues by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

For more information about the Center for Small Towns and its other programs, please give us a call or visit our webpage at <http://www.centerforsmalltowns.org>.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In November, 2002 Diana Martenson, Organization and Program Development Specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service (UMES), along with Barbara Muesing from the College of Continuing Education, submitted a proposal to the University of Minnesota Council on Public Engagement (COPE) titled, “Strengthening the University-Community Connection”. The proposal stated, “This project will focus on building relationships between five colleges/departments and Extension based on university-community partnerships and research.” The goal of the COPE project was to develop and test a model of collaboration to connect University of Minnesota Extension Service programs with University of Minnesota resources.

During the spring of 2003, discussions between Diana Martenson and staff members of the Center for Small Towns (CST) located at the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) campus were held. The purpose of these discussions was to explore and develop specific aspects of the COPE proposal in the west central Minnesota area – specifically incorporating the UMM campus into the conceptual design of the project. In this rural region, the Center for Small Towns has a defined role for brokering the faculty, staff, students, and programs of the University of Minnesota to small towns. As a result of these discussions, primary features of the pilot project and a potential model for collaboration began to emerge. This model would be built using a survey of UMES staff, the measurement of UMM faculty interest, and the identification of considerations needed to support this type of collaborative effort.

In the Summer of 2003, Benjamin Winchester, the coordinator of the Data Analysis and Research at the Center for Small Towns, and UMM senior student, Luke Vanasse, were recruited to the research team and began work to determine the components of a model created to support the collaborative involvement of UMM and University of Minnesota Extension Service (UMES) in community-based programs. Programs to be implemented in the West Central District of UMES included the counties of: Big Stone, Chippewa, Douglas, Grant, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, and Wilkin.

Significant changes in the UMES structure were implemented during the summer of 2003 and the project timeframe. The system of offices in each of the 87 counties of the state was replaced by the location of 18 Regional Centers in proximity to higher education institutions. This strengthened the potential connections and afforded new opportunities for collaboration between the coordinate campuses of the University of Minnesota as well as select MNSCU institutions across the state.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research team envisioned a study that 1) focuses on the connections between UMES programs and UMM disciplines; and 2) explores the interest and abilities of other university programs as contributors to UMES programs. In short, the data collected in this report will attempt to match current UMES capacity area programs (which currently work in and with small towns) with appropriate UMM programs (that have the interest and potential to work in small towns). For example, the Access Minnesota Main Street program can be enhanced by

connecting the faculty and/or students in the UMM disciplines of the Economics and Management program with communities which desire these services.

The program envisioned can be expressed through the development of four major components:

1. Data component. The first major component involved is the development of a matrix to visualize UMES programs along one axis and UMM disciplines along the other axis to locate appropriate “fits” between content areas and resources. Two audiences were utilized to help fill in the cells of the matrix which appears on pages 8-11 – the CST research team and UMES staff.

UMES currently operates five capacity areas: Agriculture, Food and Environment; Community Vitality; Family Development; Natural Resources and Environment; and Youth Development. The research team decided to not include the Agriculture, Food and Environment capacity area in this survey. There were two reasons for this. First, UMM is a liberal arts college which does not have programs or disciplines involved in agricultural or environmental activities. Second, the West Central Research and Outreach Center, located less than a mile to the east of the UMM campus, has faculty on staff dedicated to agricultural issues. This omission may have been a shortcoming in the methodological design as there are individual offerings that may be compatible with UMM disciplines, such as the Biology program and the potential contributions to the environmental aspects of the UMES capacity area.

An electronic survey was developed and administered to UMES Regional Extension Educators (REE) in July, 2003 to determine 1) how the resources of the University are currently located and accessed by REE personnel and 2) which disciplines at UMM may provide appropriate expertise to individual capacity area programs. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A. The survey was developed and tested through consultations with UMES staff members Kay Stanek, John Cunningham, and Cindy Bigger, as well as CST staff. Kay Stanek then invited all UMES staff in the district to participate in the survey, which was offered electronically on the CST website. The survey had 20 responses, resulting in a 100% response rate.

2. Faculty inventory component. The second major component involves an inventory of UMM faculty that have a desires to work with and in communities. A query was sent via a UMM-wide discussion list to gauge faculty interest in partnering with UMES on a professional, course-based, or personal level. Ten responses from staff in a number of UMM disciplines/programs were received. The timing of the query may have prevented other faculty from responding for during the summer many are out of the city, state or even country. An additional round of faculty recruitment is scheduled to occur during the 2003-04 academic year.

A round table discussion was initially planned between UMES staff and UMM faculty to begin relationship building activities, but due to the lack of UMM staff availability during the summer months, combined with UMES structural staffing changes, it was not held. The issues of seasonal timing, however, is a component of the potential working relationship that was identified early in the process.

3. University non-disciplinary programs. In addition to the data gathering needs, there is a need to understand the environment and organizational requirements of this model. There are a number of UMM programs that serve specific audiences outside of credit-based academics, including the Minority Student Program, Continuing Education, Regional Programs and Summer Session. An inventory of these programs can provide additional resources for UMES programs.

4. Support structure. The research team needed to determine the roles and responsibilities of an organizational support structure, situated between UMM and the staff of UMES that is required to help ensure a successful mediation between the two units. The Center for Small Towns currently utilizes strategies which provide a basis for model generation. Components include locating and securing student employees and internships, brokering faculty and programs of the University of Minnesota, determining relevance of academic applications to community-based problems, and collaborating and networking with other rural development organizations.

III. COMPONENTS OF THE UMES-UMM MODEL

This section brings together the survey and interview findings with conceptual research to fully flesh out a model of UMM-UMES collaboration. It was related to the researchers many times by UMES staff that to achieve meaningful results it is necessary to develop meaningful relationships between interested parties. To explore the process of collaboration we turn to the following table developed by the University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension program.

<i>Integration</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Low  High	Communication	Network, round table	Dialogue and common understanding. Clearinghouse for information. Explore common and conflicting interest.
	Contribution	Support group	Mutual exchanges to support each other's efforts. Build mutual obligation and trust.
	Coordination	Task force, council, alliance	Match and coordinate needs, resources, and activities. Limit duplication of services. Adjust current activities for more efficient and effective results.
	Cooperation	Partnership, consortium, coalition	Link resources to help parties achieve joint goals. Discover shared interests. Build trust by working together.
	Collaboration	Collaborative	Develop shared vision. Build inter-dependent system to address issues and opportunities. Share resources.

Table 1: Relationship Building Processes¹

¹ University of Wisconsin-Extension. 1998. *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential*. Program Development and Evaluation. Report G3658-8.

The table shows a continuum of increasing intensity for building relationships and mutual work. Relationships are the result of interpersonal and organizational mechanisms that must be encouraged and developed. At the heart of collaboration is *labor*. Only when labor is dedicated by both sides can collaboration exist. This process starts out simply through communications and evolves over time to a high level of integration – collaboration. This provides a reminder that actions required to build a successful model of UMES-UMM collaboration must involve a number of steps that are put together into a coherent fashion. In the sections that follow, a number of factors will be examined to determine methods and considerations to guide our actions including programmatic boundaries, a programmatic overlaps, geographic boundaries, university capacity and support, individual interests, and organizational collaboration.

A. STRUCTURAL – PROGRAMMATIC BOUNDARIES

Two assumptions need to be made to begin conceptualizing this model. First, the knowledge, skills, and relationships that are held by UMES staff are bounded by the mission of the organization and their individual capacity areas. Second, the knowledge, skills, and relationships that are held by UMM faculty and staff are bounded by their academic discipline. In other words, UMM is not familiar with UMES, and UMES is not familiar with UMM. To overcome these boundaries, bridges must be incorporated into the model to build relationships between these two somewhat distant groups. This section will further consider each group to examine boundaries that will influence the construction of a successful process of collaboration.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION SERVICE

The Extension Service has a long history of working hand in hand with residents of rural areas to solve problems. At one time this focused primarily on agricultural production and its close association with social structures of rural communities. In the past few years, UMES has initiated changes including the establishment of elastic priorities as a response to budgetary shortcomings. Throughout these changes, UMES continues to be an agency that has direct involvement with community-based organizations and individuals.

UMES has five primary program areas, called Capacity Areas, in which work is focused:

1. Agriculture, Food, and Environment
2. Community Vitality
3. Family Development
4. Natural Resources and Environment
5. Youth Development

In each of these capacity areas there are a finite number of programmatic offerings with assigned staff. The shift to the newly created Regional Centers will change the delivery of services and may decrease the availability of some UMES programs, especially in rural areas. The decreased financial support from the local level may further narrow the range and location of possible services that will be available through UMES.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS

Knowledge at UMM is housed in specialized departments and programs. There are four divisions at UMM: Education, Humanities, Science and Mathematics, and Social Sciences. Each of these divisions house a number of disciplines. To efficiently locate appropriate resources we must recognize these programmatic boundaries and determine which ones can appropriately respond to UMES-like requests.

The UMM departments themselves do not have a mission to become involved in community-based projects. However, there is a widespread interest in community involvement outside of the actual university organization. A large number of faculty and staff do want to be involved in both informal and voluntary ways. There exists a great oral network that is used to locate and secure human and other resources to help solve local problems. This network is especially strong at a small, personal university such as UMM – and one which the Center for Small Towns has utilized many times to locate and secure assistance for rural communities.

To access the resources of UMM, there is no authorized “one stop shop” for the public to call to help answer community-based questions. However, there are some offices that have interests in serving community-based individuals and organizations. CST was created to be a liaison between University of Minnesota resources and community endeavors, while at the same time providing benefits for faculty and students.

B. PROGRAMMATIC OVERLAP MATRIX

To assist with the conceptual development of the UMES-UMM model, the boundaries described above will be examined in further detail. To accomplish this, each UMES program has been matched with UMM disciplines to identify connecting points between them. The tables on the following pages incorporate the data collection from the online survey responses of UMES staff concerning their knowledge of UMM disciplines. There are over 25 disciplines at UMM that were a part of this query. To save space, the disciplines that were not identified by UMES staff are excluded from the following tables. The last table summarizes these connections between UMES programs and UMM disciplines.

<i>Community Vitality</i>	Computer Science	Education	English	European Studies	French	Geography	German	History	Latin AAS	Management/Economics
Access eGov	3									
Civic Engagement		1								1
U Lead		1								1
U Facilitate		1								1
Access eInfo	1									
At Your Service		1	1							1
Business Retention and Expansion										2
Community Economic Analysis										2
Community Business & Industry Climate		1								2
Community Tourism Development		1	1			2				1
MN Public Finance Education										1
Rural Health Works										1
Communities in Transition (MN Nice)		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Diversity in the Workplace		1						1	1	1
Language and Culture Support					1		1	1	1	
Spotlight on Culture				1	1		1	1	1	
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>15</i>

Table 2: Community Vitality Overlap Matrix

<i>Community Vitality</i>	Mathematics	Philosophy	Political Science	Psychology	Sociology	Spanish	Speech Communications	Statistics	Women's Studies
Access eGov			1		1		1		
Civic Engagement			3		2		1	1	2
U Lead		1	1	1	1		1		2
U Facilitate		2	1	1	1		1		
Access eInfo									
At Your Service				1	1		1		1
Business Retention and Expansion	1	1	1					1	
Community Economic Analysis								2	
Community Business & Industry Climate					1			1	
Community Tourism Development			1		1			1	
MN Public Finance Education	1		1		1			1	
Rural Health Works									
Communities in Transition (MN Nice)		1	1	1	2	1	1		1
Diversity in the Workplace				1	2		1		1
Language and Culture Support				1	2	1			
Spotlight on Culture					1	1	1	1	1
<i>TOTAL</i>	2	5	10	6	16	3	8	8	8

Table 3: Community Vitality Overlap Matrix (con't)

<i>Family Development</i>	Anthropology	Education	Management/Economics	Psychology	Sociology	Wellness & Sports Science
Dollar Works		1	2			
Rent Wise		1	1			
Financial Security in Later Life		1	2			
Planning Ahead for Retirement		1	2			
Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?	1		1		1	
High School Financial Planning		2	2			
Financial Champions		2	1			
Identity Theft	1	1			1	
4-H Consumer Decision Making		2				
Home Stretch		1	1			
Disaster Preparation and Recovery	1				1	
Overweight/Obesity Prevention						1
Research Updates						1
Parenting of Adolescents	1	1		1	1	
Parenting of Adolescents (SE Asia)	1	1		1	1	
Parents Forever	1	1		1	1	
Family Decisions for Life	1			1	1	
<i>TOTAL</i>	7	15	12	4	7	2

Table 4: Family Development Overlap Matrix

<i>Youth Development</i>	Art History / Studio Art	Computer Science	Education	Liberal Arts for Human Services	Music	Psychology	Sociology	Speech Communications	Theater Arts	Wellness & Sports Science
General 4-H Programs			2	1				1		1
4-H Adventures		1	3		1	1		1	1	2
4-H Afterschool	1	1	3		1			1	1	1
4-H Clubs			3	1		1	1			
Making the Most of School Time			4	1		1	1			1
Master Youth Development			3	1		1	1			
MN BEST			3	1						1
<i>TOTAL</i>	1	2	21	5	2	4	3	3	2	6

Table 5: Youth Development Overlap Matrix

<i>Natural Resources and Environment</i>	Biology	Chemistry	Computer Science	Education	Geology	Management/Economics	Mathematics	Political Science	Sociology	Speech Communications	Statistics
Best Practices for Environmental Field Days		1		1	1						
Outdoor Corps (Environmental career path exploration)	1	1			1						
Reach for the Sky & White Earth Circle of Life Math & Science Summer School											
Improving Building Durability			1								
Enhancing Home Energy Efficiency											
Moisture Control in Homes: Best Practices for Builders											
Indoor Air and mold Mitigation Training Programs											
Growth Impacts (Environmental & Fiscal) on Natural Resources	1							1	1		1
Effective Decision-Making around Natural Resource Issues	1							1			1
Natural Resources Group Facilitation										1	
Using GIS and Natural Resource Inventories to Guide Local Decisions						1	1	1			1
Logger and Natural Resources Manager Education						1	1	1			1
Woodland Advisors: Training Minnesota citizens in forest ecology & forest productivity	1										
Minnesota Shade Tree Short Course	1										
Tree Care Advisor											
Professional Waste Water Training											
Septic System Operation and Maintenance											
Small Community Wastewater Solutions								1			
Wastewater Alternatives								1			
Exotic Species Prevention											
Non-point Education for Municipal Official (NEMO)	1							1			
Shoreland Education Programs	1							1			
Shoreland Vegetation and Landscape											
Stormwater Runoff Management and Wetlands Protection											
<i>TOTAL</i>	7	2	1	1	2	2	2	8	1	1	4

Table 6: Natural Resources and Environment Overlap Matrix

The data from Tables 2 through 5 have been summarized in the table below to identify *primary* and *secondary* disciplines that would be potential fits with each capacity area. A primary discipline is one which would be of benefit to programs across the capacity area while a secondary discipline would address a smaller number of programs.

	Primary Disciplines	Secondary Disciplines
Community Vitality	<i>Computer Science, Management/Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Speech Communications, Statistics, Women’s Studies</i>	Education, All Foreign Languages, History, Philosophy, Psychology
Family Development	Anthropology, Education, Management/Economics, <i>Psychology, Wellness and Sports Science</i>	Sociology
Natural Resources and Environment	Biology, <i>Management/Economics, Political Science, Statistics</i>	Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics
Youth Development	Education, Psychology, Wellness and Sports Science	<i>Biology, Computer Science, Music, Sociology, Speech Communications, Studio Art, Theater Arts</i>

Table 7: Primary and Secondary Disciplines by Capacity Area

Those disciplines in *italics* are those which were either 1) not identified by survey respondents or 2) identified as secondary and moved to the primary category (or visa versa) by research staff. The listed disciplines provide a focus for the collaborative model and a basis for relationship building activities between UMES staff and the UMM faculty/students.

The next step is to examine other enhancements, or constraints, that may influence the nature and type of activities that can occur.

C. STRUCTURAL – GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

In the summer of 2003, UMES announced the creation of eighteen *Regional Centers* that provide a base for outreach operations across the state (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: UMES Regional Centers

With the exception of Cloquet, Mora and Roseau, the Regional Centers are located in communities that have a college or university presence. This provides a valuable potential for partnerships that are desired in the scope of this project. The following map shows the location of rural colleges and universities across the state of Minnesota. UMES recognized that these institutions of higher education as a valuable source of support for UMES programs by locating the Regional Centers in close proximity.

Minnesota Rural Colleges

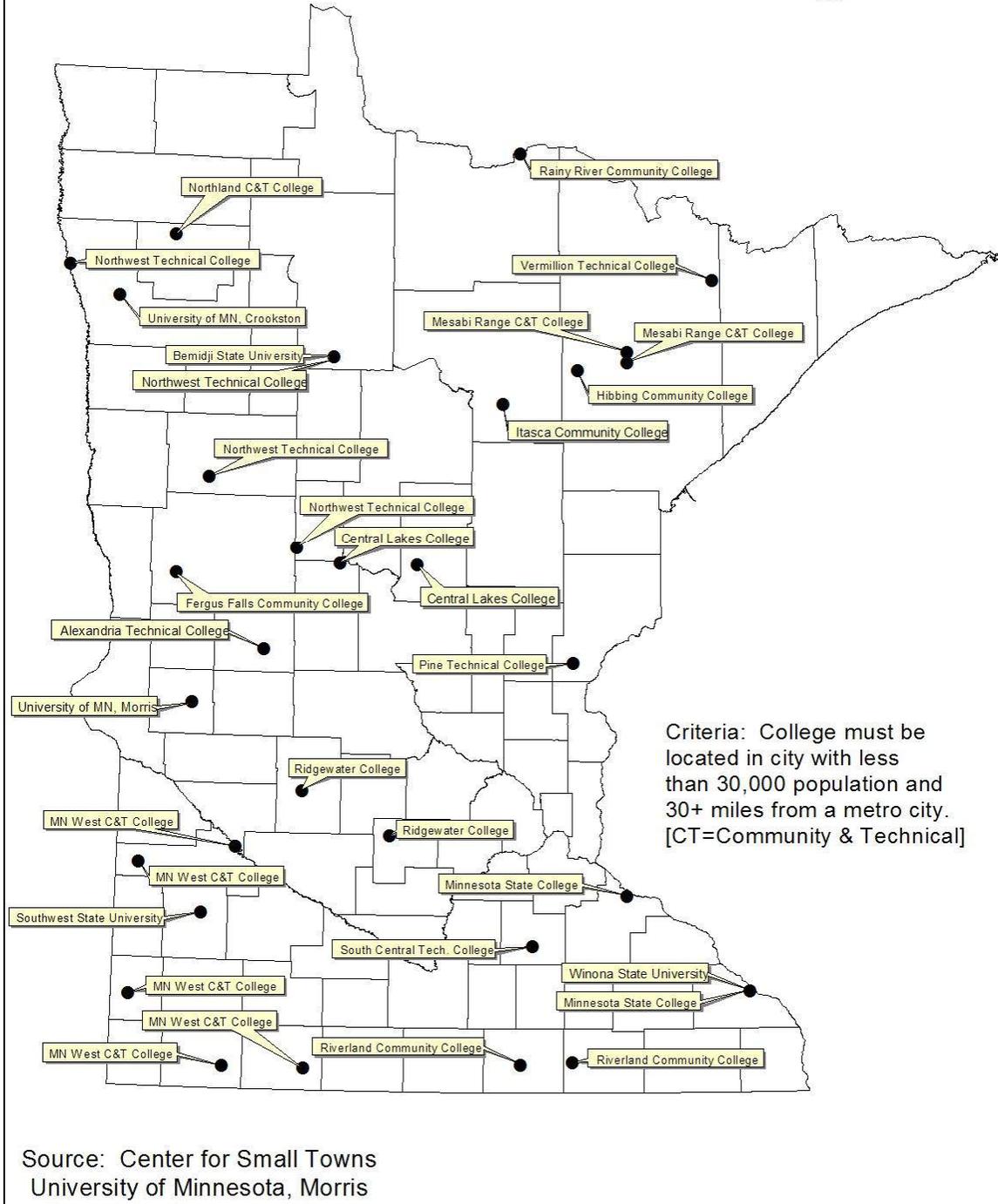


Figure 2: Rural Colleges in Minnesota

At the University of Minnesota, Morris the involvement of faculty and students of UMM in UMES programs will be bounded by the ability to reach out in a meaningful way. These boundaries are based on variables such as travel time and costs. In some instances, electronic communications can facilitate the jumping of these hurdles, in others they cannot.

The ability of colleges and universities to work together with UMES will be impacted by *proximity issues*. That is, the types of possible engagement will differ as the radius surrounding the university/college increases. These types can be further broken down by the need for *interactive* and *non-interactive* activities. An *interactive* approach is needed when the participants in the UMES program require personal contact in the delivery of their services. For example, the programs involved in Youth Development are primarily interactive activities. A *non-interactive* approach is used when the program processes can be done at a location outside of the community. The programs of Community Vitality, such as Community Economic Analysis, may be ideal for developing non-interactive partnerships. As the relationships between UMES staff and UMM personnel evolve, these identifications can be made in greater detail.

D. UNIVERSITY CAPACITY AND SUPPORT

The University of Minnesota system is a land-grant institution with a responsibility to create, and share knowledge with, and for, the public. In its mission statement on Outreach and Public Service there is reference to “extend, apply, and exchange knowledge between the University and society by applying scholarly expertise to community problems, by helping organizations and individuals respond to their changing environments, and by making the knowledge and resources created and preserved at the University to the citizens of the state, the nation, and the world.” At UMM the current mission statement declares that UMM “is an educational resource and cultural center for citizens of west central Minnesota.”

As a whole, these missions provide a public-good oriented ideal. At the level of the individual – that is, faculty, staff and students – it becomes more difficult to include the general public in this knowledge production process. This has important consequences as it relates to UMES gaining access to the faculty, staff, students and programs of a university and, in this case, UMM.

FACULTY

The tripartite mission of the university includes Teaching and Learning, Research and Discovery, and Outreach and Public Service components. At the same time, there are three motivations for faculty in tenure accreditation: Teaching, Research and Service. These three components are the basis for tenure and are integral to the incentive system within the University of Minnesota. At this point, there is a need to recognize the differences between Service and Outreach. Service has been a strong, primary incentive for UMM faculty tenure – Outreach is secondary. One understanding of these differences includes the idea that Outreach is not completed by the internal units of the university, but by units that are externally-focused. Examples include the Extension Service and Continuing Education. In this project, we must find ways to incorporate this disconnection between the overall mission and the structure of faculty rewards to better understand incentives to participate.

Each of these components must be examined further to fully explore potential involvement with UMES.

1. Teaching. This component can take two forms: Credit and non-credit teaching.
 - a. Credit teaching includes the normal coursework that is offered on a Semester basis, or during the summer term. There are some courses that are offered annually and some periodically. UMES faculty and staff can also have teaching assignments on some U of M campuses, though there are none currently at UMM. It is through credit teaching that access to a large number or group of students is best attained. A course may also be integrated with a service learning, traditional community service, or civic engagement component which would complement the types of activities that UMES would offer.
 - b. Non-credit teaching occurs when a faculty member agrees to teach non-university student residents of the region on an informal basis. This was identified by one survey respondent who indicated that faculty from the Twin Cities campus “teach lay people programs in Renville and Kandiyohi counties” without incentives. A personal dedication by individual faculty to public service is a necessary requirement which may prove a challenge when time is scarce.
2. Research. There is a trend of research becoming more specialized and complex as we move forward in the production of knowledge. This can be a barrier to working with some faculty members in generalized community projects. However, this will not deter us from making attempts to bring together practical experience with research. Research involves the systematic study of problems using scientific methods and a rigorous methodology. In this case, it involves the connecting of community-based problems with university-based solutions. There is a movement across the country, called *action research*, whereby the community residents are actively involved with university faculty in the identification and solution of community-based problems. At UMM, while not termed action research, there are a number of faculty that have been involved in the solving of community problems through research and also able to publish the findings which then contribute to the research focus of tenure.
3. Service. A traditional understanding of service has been service to the university, through faculty involvement on committees or to professional organizations within one’s disciplinary specialty. Generally, these service activities keep the machinery of the university moving along. In recent years there have been attempts by some faculty on the UMM campus to expand the service component to include service learning, civic learning, and civic engagement. At UMM there is a history of community involvement using these methods beginning as early as 1965. Understandings of these efforts are often expressed as a contribution to *teaching* pedagogy rather than the institutional incentive of *service*.

To better understand the individual motivations of UMM faculty, an email was sent to a UMM-wide listserv in June of 2003 to gauge faculty interest in working with UMES people and programs. Almost immediately, a half-dozen responses came back. After one week 10 UMM faculty and staff expressed interest in working with UMES program structures. These ten are:

1. Bert Ahern – History

2. LeAnn Dean – Briggs Library
3. Tammy Faux – Psychology, Commission on Women
4. Andrew Hostetler – Psychology (Adulthood and Ageing specialty)
5. Karen Johnson – Continuing Education
6. Eric Klinger – Psychology, Human Services
7. Joy Leafblad – Regional Fitness Center
8. Argie Manolis – English, Service Learning Coordinator
9. Jeff Ratliff-Crain – Psychology
10. Rujira Rojjanaprayon – Speech Communications

These faculty and staff responded that while they are not familiar with specific UMES programs, they would be willing to begin a process of relationship-building activities. There now becomes a need to bring together these respondents with UMES staff for a roundtable discussion to share specifics about desires. To help facilitate the productivity at these meetings, there is a need to further explore the areas of potential overlap. This was partially completed through a *Faculty Interest Snapshot* created by the research team to identify desires, areas of personal research, course schedules, and non-credit community involvement interests. An example of a completed snapshot is attached as Appendix B.

STUDENTS

Students at UMM can be involved in communities through both for-credit and non-credit ways as well. The for-credit methods are highly dependent upon the level of faculty commitment to an integration of student involvement methods in the coursework or through internships. The non-credit methods can include volunteer service, student employment, and community service. Service is something that students would undertake outside of the classroom and is highly dependent on personal motivations towards public service – such as volunteering at a senior citizen facility. To reach students in this manner, an existing process would need to be accessed or new ones developed that would target this student audience to make them aware of UMES-sponsored activities.

Student employment opportunities can be available to students both on and off campus. Student employment on campus may be an attractive option for students that want to complement their curricular learning with a parallel community effort. This is more difficult to achieve outside of support structures on campus. Within UMM there are connections that can be made through programs such as the Center for Small Towns or even individual departments that would provide a mechanism for employing students. If a satisfactory mechanism for achieving student involvement did not already exist at UMM, there would be a need for a UMES program.

OFFICES AND PROGRAMS

Existing programs of UMM also provide a rich opportunity for collaboration with UMES. An inventory of the UMM campus included the following organizations:

- Center for Small Towns
- Civic Engagement Taskforce
- Community Service and Volunteerism in the Office of Student Activities
- Continuing Education
- Learn and Serve grant administered through the Faculty Development Center
- Minority Student Program

- Regional Programs and Summer Session
- Regional Fitness Center
- West Central Historical Research Center

Further interviews are required to fully determine the potential levels of collaboration that the individual organizations would be willing to undertake. This is a valuable part of the overall model, and helps to ensure an integrative approach to identifying all of the resources of UMM.

The seasonal curricular system at UMM must be recognized and included in any model of collaboration. There are two semesters, fall and spring, of sixteen weeks, one 3-week May Session, and two 5-week Summer Sessions. This demands a tightly integrated system to make the most of the segmented time periods to be successful. During the summer it may be difficult to achieve positive results in a curricular fashion, yet student employment and internships may prove valuable.

E. INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS

The people on the ground are those that will make this project work. In order to move from the conceptual to the practical we must take into account the interests and passions of UMM faculty and UMES Regional Extension Educators (REE). The programmatic boundaries described in Section A identify the connecting points. Now we must find practical methods for bridging the points.

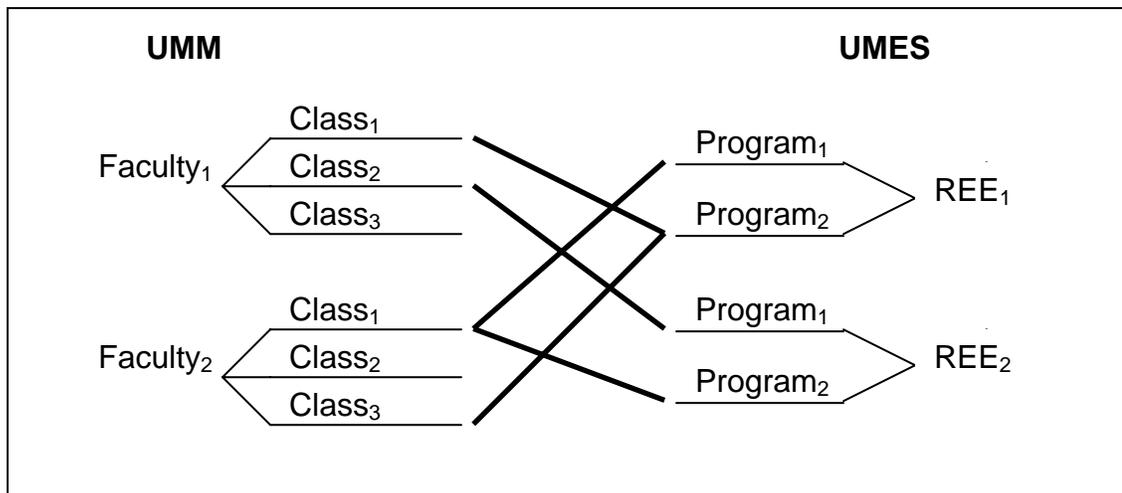


Figure 3: UMM and UMES Overlaps

The chart above describes the ways in which a connection can be made between faculty coursework and UMES programs. In some cases a single course can be matched up with a single program. Additionally, some courses can be fit with more than one program or multiple courses can contribute to a single program. All this begins with an inventory of course content which is captured by the Faculty Interest Snapshots. The roundtable discussions can then begin by introducing the faculty and REE with matched assets.

In the newly formed regional center structure, the following staff are based from the Morris office where Kay Stanek is the Campus Regional Director:

Agriculture, Food, & Environment

Bret Oelke, REE, Agricultural Business Management

Community Vitality

David Nelson, REE, Community Economics

Family Development

Sara Croymans, REE, Family Resource Management

Cinda Carlson, REE, Health & Nutrition

Natural Resources & Environment

Amy Rager, REE, Environmental Science Education

Youth Development

Brian McNeill, REE, Youth Development

Carrie Olson, REE, Youth Development

At the same time that UMM faculty can enhance community programs by teaching a course or leading a group, the REE's can also enrich the UMM campus through course instruction lectures or brown-bag seminars. These would provide avenues for information sharing and relationship-building.

F. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Center for Small Towns is currently operating on the UMM campus and has a mission that is complementary to UMES:

To focus the University's attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota's small towns with locally identified issues by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students

CST also has a history of collaboration with UMES in the west central Minnesota region. The potential for further involving faculty, staff, students, and programs in community-based activities between these two units seems timely.

The Director of the Center for Small Towns also serves as the Director of Continuing Education, Regional Programs, and Summer Session. Over the years, numerous Extension Educators have been involved with UMM and CST programs and visa-versa. CST is governed by an Advisory Council made up of UMM faculty, UMM division chairs, members of local units of government, rural and community development organizations, and UMES Extension administrators and educators. These areas of collaboration continue and can be strengthened as UMES makes its transition to the regional center structure. CST utilizes five working strategies/methodologies in addressing community requests for accessing university resources:

1. Assessment and evaluation. The process of evaluation is utilized to strengthen the value of operational programs. An assessment tool can be tailored to the situational requirements, where the client may be a community or an organization.

2. Brokering university resources. Thorough cooperation with other units across the University of Minnesota, the Center connects people to needed information and services.
3. Collaboration and networking – Through cooperation with other state and national organizations involved in community and rural development additional support can be realized.
4. Data analysis and research. The combination of reliable data with research assistance, survey design, and methodological selection is essential in solving community-based problems.
5. Service learning and internships. Service learning is a teaching/learning method that connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning, reflection, personal growth and development of civic responsibility. Internships provide an educational extension of UMM’s liberal arts program, through a learning contract between students, faculty and the larger community.

It is believed that these methodologies can be useful in the support of a collaborative UMES-UMM model. The following section will examine the model in more detail.

IV. THE UMES-UMM MODEL

The core of the model is a centralized support system. This structure will minimize duplication, coordinate needs and resources, and develop activities for a UMES-UMM collaborative model. This section examines the components and activities incorporated in such a support structure.

- a. Communication and Facilitation. This is a basic and integral component of relationship building. The use of telecommunications can facilitate this nicely through email lists, message boards, and newsletters. Nothing replaces face-to-face meetings, especially early in the relationship building process, yet these can be supportive structures during the course of the project.
- b. Faculty/student involvement. This aspect of the support structure involves the identification, recruitment and placement of both faculty and students. This includes the composition of job descriptions, recruitment (in collaboration with public relations), and developing both contracts and memorandums of understanding. The primary methods of involvement include:
 - Student internships
 - Course integration of service learning and civic engagement components.
 - Service (volunteer) opportunities
 - Faculty/student applied research
- c. Brokering resources and collaboration. This can be done within the university system or with related rural development organizations. The involvement of these other organizations can provide additional value to existing UMES programs.

- d. Mentoring. To achieve effective learning between UMM faculty and UMES REEs, a more effective collaboration system can be achieved through mentoring relationships.
- e. Public relations. To communicate the deliverable programs and services with the general public and further develop the public connection between UMES and UMM, a media/public relations mechanism must be present. UMES is a frequent contributor to local media. This partnership would benefit from sharing programmatic happenings, advertising off-campus student positions, and generally providing visibility in these changing times. In general, this will allow UMES to tell its story to the public.

The roles and responsibilities described here would require substantial effort on the part of those involved. The research team does have a bias in that many of these support structure mechanisms are a part of the day-to-day activities of the Center for Small Towns. Over the years, these have been the recurrent themes required to ensure a successful collaboration between UMM resources and community desires.

While CST has been the liaison for West Central small towns to access UMM resources, the UMES move to Regional Centers creates an even greater opportunity to cooperatively serve our rural communities. A collaborative structure now needs to be established so each unit can track and account for its contributions and impact in small towns. At the same time, this collaboration should – as a whole – be bigger than the sum of the parts.

It is believed that many of the support structure mechanisms identified in the previous section can be fulfilled by the programs, skills, and knowledge within CST. During the 2003-04 academic year, CST has committed funds toward a UMM student – as well as substantial staff time –to further test, develop, and modify this model at the UMM campus in conjunction with UMES personnel.

Next steps in the research and model development:

- Follow-up inquiries to UMM faculty to determine additional interest in working with UMES programs.
- Complete Faculty Interest Worksheets for the remaining faculty that have not yet been interviewed.
- Complete an inventory of UMM (non-credit) organizations and their potential for contributions to UMES programs.
- Hold at least two meetings between matched UMES staff and UMM faculty to begin the relationship-building process.
- Determine the interactive and non-interactive aspects of UMES programs.
- Work with UMM programs to provide incentives for faculty to become involved in community-based projects through UMES.
- Develop a memorandum of understanding between UMM and UMES to facilitate future outreach activities on behalf of the University of Minnesota.
- Share the lessons learned with other U of M/UMES partnerships such as the Crookston campus.

APPENDIX A. Online UMES Staff Survey

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CONTACT THE CENTER FOR SMALL TOWNS FOR A COPY OF THE
INSTRUMENT.

APPENDIX B. Faculty Community Interest Snapshot

UMM Faculty Community Interest Snapshot Center for Small Towns

Name/Discipline:

Rujira Rojjanaprapayon
Speech Communication Discipline

Desire:

To bring together his research agenda with civic engagement / service learning outcomes to integrate coursework.

Personal Research:

Diversity, multiculturalism, organizational policies, unobtrusive techniques

Course Schedule:

Fall

- Interpersonal Communications
- Small Group (not 2003-04) – observational techniques such as Glenwood City Council
- Human Communications Theory
- Intercultural Communications

Spring

- Introduction to Speech Communication
- Senior Seminar
- Organizational Communications

Non-Course Community Involvement Interests:

- ESL courses
- Provide assistance to foreign newcomers to the Morris area (non-UMM) to be a connecting point for acclimation.
- Organizational dynamics – completing internal audits of organizations to improve communications.