



Hennepin-University Partnership Update

From the Office of Commissioner Jan Callison

The Hennepin-University Partnership (HUP) is supported by the Hennepin County Board and the University of Minnesota. On behalf of the County Board, I serve as the Board lead, responsible for providing guidance and monitoring the progress of this important initiative. This update is intended to communicate within Hennepin County government about HUP activities and outcomes. For additional information, please contact Kathie Doty at kdoty@umn.edu or me at jan.callison@co.hennepin.mn.us.

Design Thinking—a New Approach

According to Dean Tom Fisher at the University's College of Design, there has been a revolution in design thinking, moving from designing objects and buildings to designing systems. Steve Kelley, Director of the University's Center for Science, Technology and Public Policy, agrees and wants to expand the use of "right brain" thinking to address tough public policy issues. So what's involved in this so-called design thinking? It includes using proto-typing strategies, visual thinking, and more participatory processes to generate breakthrough solutions. According to an article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, businesses were the first to embrace design thinking to tackle complex problems, and now the non-profit world is exploring the potential of this different approach as well.



To explore what this might mean for Hennepin, the HUP convened key Hennepin staff with Dean Fisher and Professor Kelley, and subsequent to this meeting, a pilot project was conducted with the Property Services Department. While this project generated some useful results, it was a first step and further work is underway to see whether the full potential for design thinking will work for the specific project of interest (interactive waiting rooms). Meanwhile, the next step in exploring how design thinking might be used at Hennepin will be a workshop to be held in February.

For those interested in learning more about this new way of approaching problem solving, articles on design thinking will be posted to the HUP website.

Preliminary Results in from HUP Assessment

For a complete update on the HUP assessment that took place over the past few months, see the story on page 2. Some initial findings from interviews and focus groups:

- Continued strong support for this partnership but also a recognition that there are opportunities for it to evolve and grow to add more value for both entities
- Appreciation from the County and the University for what each offers -
 - The University is viewed by Hennepin as a source of best practices information, differing perspectives, and program evaluation expertise
 - The County is viewed by the University as a source of data and potential funding for research; also it provides a place where students can apply their learnings to 'real world' situations
- Do more: the HUP office should continue to work on developing better tools and resources to help connect practitioners with researchers—perhaps an online tool
- Communicate better: results of collaborations should be made more available so all can learn

Have Ideas for a collaborative project? Think you might want to work with the University but don't know where to start?

Contact the HUP Project office

Winter
2010/2011

Inside this issue:

HUP Completes 2010 Assessment	2
Third Annual Sympo-	2
Updates on HUP Focus Areas	3
Citizen Professional Model Comes to Hennepin County	4
Changes at the Partnership Office	4

Hennepin-University Partnership Office

Kathie Doty
Program Director
612-625-4383
kdoty@umn.edu

Amy Fjellman
Program Associate
612-625-9885
fjel0032@umn.edu

Research Assistant
612-625-3255

Or visit us online:
www.umn.edu/hup



HUP Completes 2010 Assessment

A program assessment of the Hennepin-University Partnership (HUP) which began in August is nearing completion.

“Given the novel and innovative nature of the Partnership, it is essential to undertake a thorough and probing evaluation at regular intervals,” said Commissioner Jan Callison, lead commissioner from the County Board on the HUP Management Team. “The HUP Management Team asked HUP staff to examine three key areas: Accountability - is the Partnership doing what it aimed to do?; Usefulness - is the Partnership an effective tool for both the University and the County?; and Readiness - what changes should the partnership consider as the needs of both the County and the University change over the next few years?”

Using this framework as a guide, the HUP worked with the University’s Office of Measurement Services and the Minnesota Center for Survey Research on a qualitative assessment. This included 36 interviews with leaders from Hennepin and the University and six focus groups with managers and faculty. The quantitative portion of the assessment looked at the number of collaborative projects and work orders, number of collaborative partners, and number and type of publications.

Qualitative Assessment

Key themes that emerged from interviews and focus groups included: County respondents felt the University was viewed as a source of best practice information, professional competence, differing perspectives and program evaluation opportunities. The Master Cooperative Agreement and the accompanying work order process were seen as successful in cutting down on red tape which had previously been a barrier to collaboration. Work with University interns and graduate student researchers was seen as providing invaluable contributions to County projects. On the University side, access to funding for research and data were highlighted as major positive aspects of the University/County collaboration. There was also significant appreciation of the “real world” benefits of involvement with the Partnership – particularly those related to the University’s land grant responsibilities to the community. University participants cited the HUP office as providing key matchmaking services for getting projects started.

Interviewees and focus group participants also said they wanted more— County respondents felt more could be done to help understand the complex structure of the University, as well as greater explanation of (and preparation for) the ways researchers plan their time and respond to County time pressures. University interviewees wanted to know more about the Partnership and how they could access resources to advance their research and teaching goals. Both wanted additional resources to help make links, and an online tool was suggested. Also, more work needs to be done to make sure people know about the MCA and work order process and to address problems that occur when the ‘paperwork’ gets diverted to the wrong departments at Hennepin or the U.

Quantitative Assessment

A summary was prepared using data that has been tracked through the Partnership. More than 95 connections have been recorded since 2005 in subject areas that span a range of County interests. Since the implementation of the streamlined contracting process under the Master Cooperative Agreement in 2007, 47 work order requests have been processed, with individual work order amounts averaging about \$28,000. The amount of funding for collaborative projects over the first three years of the MCA totaled nearly \$1.3 million. In analyzing collaborations that have occurred since the inception of the HUP, it was found that more than 30 publications were generated including academic journal articles, research reports, graduate student program evaluations, and presentations. With regard to hosting networking events, the Partnership has planned and convened two major symposia designed to bring the County and University communities together to discuss common challenges and opportunities, and has also hosted smaller events and noontime forums focused on specific issues.

The HUP is continuing to analyze the results of the assessment and will be building its 2011 work plan based on input provided through the assessment process.

Third Annual Hennepin-University Symposium

Planning is underway for the third Hennepin-University Symposium to be held on **Friday, February 4, 2011** at the HHH Center on the University’s West Bank. HUP staff are working on identifying a keynote speaker, developing panel presentation ideas, and addressing logistics for this event. We are building upon past experience and looking at evaluations from prior events to get ideas on how to make this a great experience for attendees. One suggestion was to provide more time for informal networking—we plan to accommodate this request.

Mark your calendar now for this event!

Hennepin-University Partnership Focus Areas

Educational Achievement

Increasing high school graduation rates is considered one of the most effective ways to improve the well-being of the community.

Major public policy question: *What are the most effective ways for the County to influence high school graduation rates?*

- Hennepin County Environmental Services is interested in improving the environmental literacy of youth to ensure they are well-equipped to make sustainable choices as adults. As part of this effort, a University of Minnesota student is developing a report that examines current county efforts, best practices for educating youth, opportunities and gaps, and the potential role of the county in increasing the environmental literacy of youth. If you have feedback about this effort, including information about how you are currently working with youth, insights into best practices for educating youth, or ideas about what the county can do to enhance environmental literacy, please email Heidi Eschenbacher at heidi@umn.edu.
- Hennepin County Property Services is continuing to explore with input from the College of Design ways to improve waiting rooms to provide learning opportunities for children who wait with their parents or guardians.
- The AGRAD External Oversight Committee includes five representatives from the University who are charged with advocating for and providing oversight to the County's effort. The Advisory Committee meets quarterly and last met in October 2010.



Child Well-Being

Programs for children whose parents cannot care for them sometimes do not achieve the goal of providing a stable and secure place for them to thrive.

Major public policy question: *How can the County increase successful outcomes for children placed in foster care?*

PhD candidate Annette Semanchin from the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW) has released findings from her study on adoption disruption in Hennepin County for HSPHD. Her findings suggest there must be a greater emphasis on pre- and post placement preparation including: assessing and supporting parent readiness and preparation for adoption, development of adoption competent professionals and services to support adoptive families, and continued development of individualized, culturally competent resources to address the changing needs of adoptive youth. In addition, Ms. Semanchin highlights the need for the greater use of kin and foster parents to be considered as adoptive resources. Her work also suggests 'siloeing' remains a problem and she recommends continued development of individualized, culturally competent care systems. Ms. Semanchin has also completed research on Re-entry to Foster Care and Systems of Care Working with Long-term Foster Care Youth Transitioning to Adulthood. Links to the reports:

Systems of Care: www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/attributes/PDF/publications/SystemsOfCare.pdf

Re-entry to Foster Care: www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/attributes/PDF/Re-entry%20Report_Feb%202010_Final_rev.pdf

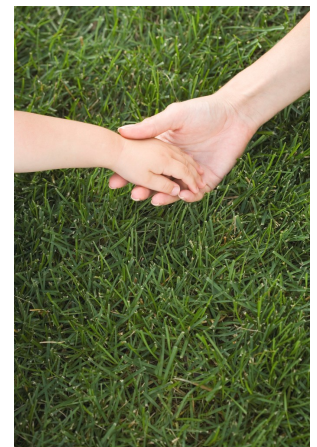
Adoption disruptions and dissolutions: www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/attributes/PDF/publications/AdoptionDissolutionReport.pdf

Impacts of the Baby Boomer Age Wave

Demographics are changing as the "baby boomers" grow older and have changing needs and preferences.

Major public policy questions: *What are the implications of the wave of aging boomers on County services and operations? And for the University?*

Hennepin's Research, Planning and Development Department is working with faculty in the Department of Sociology and the College of Design to conduct research on housing choices, constraints, and preferences of the Baby Boom generation as they move into older adulthood. The research includes (1) an analysis and projections of trends in housing in Hennepin County using US Census data, (2) a review of recently published research on factors that influence older adults housing decisions, and (3) focus groups with various segments of the population to better understand the needs and aspirations for individuals over the age of 45 living in Hennepin County. The primary goal of this research is to identify what factors influence whether baby boomers moving into older adulthood will move or not move, when they will move, and what changes in housing supply will be needed to accommodate such moves. If you are interested in this project or want more information, contact Connie Osterbaan, PhD at 612-348-4432 or connie.osterbaan@co.hennepin.mn.us.





A New Model for Citizen Engagement at Hennepin County

In 2007, Professor Bill Doherty of the Family Social Science Department teamed up with Jonette M. Zuercher from Northwest Hennepin Family Services Collaborative to create the African Family Health, Child Success project. They hoped to bring together parents and professionals organizing to design and pilot two projects that access the resources of the community to meet challenges facing African families and children. Later that year they created the Citizen Father Project, which convenes a group of mostly African American, low income fathers who are making a difference in the lives of children by fostering healthy, active fathering, challenging false images of manhood, and rebuilding family and community values.

In early 2010, the Partnership initiated a meeting with Doherty and Hennepin County Research, Planning and Development (RPD) Director Kristine Martin to find ways to implement the Citizen Professional model in Hennepin County. This model, developed by Doherty and Professor Tai Mendenhall over the past 10 years and based on the work of Harry Boyte at the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, seeks to change the way professionals in the health care and human services fields engage with communities.

Professors Doherty and Mendenhall are now working with a cohort of County employees from several areas including RPD, HSPHD, Community Corrections and the Library, with the goal of implementing the model in their own department and then coaching other professionals to do the same. Doherty and Mendenhall are providing these professionals with skills to work with local groups who see themselves as builders of initiatives, rather than simply consumers of professional services, and working with communities as co-producers of health and family well being.

The Citizen Professional group has analyzed the traditional ways the county engages with communities as compared to the Citizen Professional way (see chart below). They are using it to explain this work to their colleagues and supervisors.

Professionals seek input from citizens on projects	Professionals and citizens co-create projects
Apply current professional knowledge to the problem	Generate new knowledge together
Expectation for early county-wide impact	Focus first on local impact and then look to expand

TRADITIONAL

CITIZEN PROFESSIONAL



Sara Bielawski

Changes At The Partnership Office

This fall has seen some changes at the Hennepin University Partnership office. Longtime Partnership Program Associate Sara Bielawski was named Engagement Coordinator for the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), the Center with which the Partnership is affiliated at the University.

“It’s very hard to lose her,” said Kathie Doty, program director for the Partnership. “Sarah has been instrumental in moving the HUP forward, including managing the process to develop and maintain the Master Cooperative Agreement. The recent assessment process bore out her value—she was singled out more than once by interviewees as a very helpful and skillful resource who has effectively supported both County and University staff seeking to collaborate.”



Amy Fjellman

Amy Fjellman, a 2007 graduate of the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science degree from the Department of Family Social Science, has joined the Partnership as the new Program Associate. Before joining the Partnership, Amy worked with a non-profit organization assisting families with the process of adopting children from Ethiopia. She also manages a folkloric dance group for Guatemalan children and facilitates a support group for international and trans-racial adopted adults.

“We are thrilled to bring Amy on board to work on Hennepin-University connections,” said Doty. “Her enthusiasm for collaboration is already apparent and I know our partners at the County and the University will be as impressed with her as I am.”