Student Social Platform Initiative

President’s Emerging Leaders Program 2009–2010

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Executive Summary........................................................ 1

II. Background.................................................................... 4

III. Methodology ................................................................. 7

IV. Results.......................................................................... 10
   Student Community Engagement Experiences............... 10
   Alignment.......................................................................... 11
   Areas of Opportunity........................................................ 13
   Potential Barriers............................................................... 14
   Scope of Participation......................................................... 15
   Motives and Incentives to Participate................................ 16
   Buy-In Strategy................................................................... 18
   Adoption Strategy.............................................................. 18

V. Recommendations....................................................... 21
   Embed the Initiative into Existing Infrastructure of
   Colleges, Units, and Programs........................................... 21
   Establish Value through Clear Objectives and Measurable
   Outcomes.......................................................................... 25
   Enhance Support through Dialogue at the Local Level
   and Effective Branding....................................................... 26
   Encourage Student, Faculty, and Staff Participation
   through Incentives............................................................. 27
   Enable Students to Participate in a Voluntary and
   Flexible Initiative.......................................................... 28

VI. Conclusion.................................................................... 30

VII. Appendices

Appendix A: Office for Public Engagement: Ten Point Plan
Appendix B: Project Description and Charge
Appendix C: Project Charter
Appendix D: Peer Institution Website Review
Appendix E: Interview List
Appendix F: Interview Guides
Appendix G: Student Focus Group Exit Questionnaire
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the University of Minnesota, a student’s community engagement experiences are often episodic as a large number of students take part in several different community engagement experiences that do not build on one another and/or are disconnected with prior experiences. Research findings suggest that the true impact of community engagement occurs when students have multiple meaningful experiences over an extended period of time. The proposed Student Social Platform Initiative (the Initiative hereafter) aspires to help students build stronger connections across community engagement experiences through the identification of an area of interest. Through exploring this area of interest, they can also tie their experiences in the community more closely to their academic program and professional aspirations.

The Office for Public Engagement (OPE) charged six members of the 2009-2010 President’s Emerging Leaders (PEL) Program at the University of Minnesota to better understand the feasibility and viability of as well as the interest from the University community in implementing the Initiative.

The primary benefits of the project are a University-wide assessment of the Initiative, the identification of existing resources, and the generation of recommendations for how it might be structured, organized, and operationalized.

THEMES FROM THE INTERVIEWS

1. Undergraduate students recognized benefits of aligning community engagement activities with student academic and professional aspirations. Of the 39 students completing the exit questionnaire, 34 (87.2%) would be interested in participating in the Initiative. Thirty (89.7%) responded that they could or should identify a specific area of interest during their first two years at the University or when an academic major is identified.

2. Administrators and advisors overwhelming believe that community engagement aligns with the mission of the University. However, the definition of community engagement and how it specifically related to colleges’ missions varied.

3. Areas of opportunity as a result of the Initiative were increased university offerings, increased student retention, positive impact on student learning and development, advancement of academic and career goals, and illustrated university commitment to broader community.
4. **Potential barriers** to the Initiative included concerns about students having too many requirements, the impact it may have on four-year graduation rates, the ability of students with rigid curricula to access the Initiative, monitoring and assessment of students’ progress, and the ability of students in general to easily access and navigate the community engagement opportunities.

5. Participation in the Initiative by students requires flexibility and accessibility because of the students’ varying levels of developmental readiness. All interviewees agreed that requiring participation would decrease student investment in the Initiative.

6. **Suggested student incentives** included transcript notations, credit-bearing opportunities, career exploration and marketability, as well as social opportunities. All of these could be used to motivate students to participate in the Initiative.

7. Buy-in from all stakeholders must be established at all levels, from top to bottom and bottom to top within the University. Resources must be dedicated clearly for the long-term establishment of the Initiative.

8. Adoption of the Initiative within the existing structure of the University, colleges, and programs was heavily emphasized by all interviewed. The Initiative must capitalize on areas where there is already a good fit.

9. Marketing needs to include a clear communication strategy with strong branding of the Initiative for the successful implementation of the Initiative. Students, faculty, and staff need to know of the Initiative, its goals, the value-added, the measurable outcomes, and the fit to the existing structure.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The project team concluded that the Initiative is feasible at the University of Minnesota and that the interest level on the part of students as well as both collegiate and central University personnel is high. However, the results did yield a great deal of insight into important considerations that could affect the success of the Initiative. Based on our findings, the project team recommends that the following be included in the strategic plan for the structure, organization, and operation of the Initiative.

1. **Embed the Initiative into existing infrastructure of colleges, units, and programs.** Support it through a central point of coordination and a central technology gateway.
2. Establish value through clear objectives and measurable outcomes. These must be continually communicated at multiple levels to ensure strong messaging and clear outcomes.

3. Enhance support through dialogue at the local level and effective branding. Authentic dialogue at all levels is needed to create buy-in, to solidify community engagement as an institutional goal, and to integrate the Initiative into the existing infrastructure.

4. Encourage student, faculty, and staff participation through incentives. An understanding of the different stakeholders’ motivations as well as the culture within each college, unit, and program is needed to create appropriate incentives.

5. Enable students to participate in a voluntary and flexible initiative. Encourage self-motivation and enhance individual creativity of the students by creating a framework that is easy to access and adapts to their needs and development.
BACKGROUND

THE UNIVERSITY’S TRIPARTITE MISSION

The University of Minnesota, hereafter referred to as “the University”, community values a tradition of service that benefits the greater good of the state, nation, and the world. To be most influential, the Initiative needs to enhance the quality of each aspect of the University’s core mission:

1. Research and Discovery;
2. Teaching and Learning;
3. Outreach and Public Service.

Research and Discovery
Community engagement can significantly impact partnerships through research and discovery. A current example is the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), the goal of which is to help students become involved in research and creative activity to stimulate their minds, broaden their perspectives, expand their intellectual and social networking, and strengthen their connections to the University community as well as the research and creative communities nationally and throughout the world. By engaging in a partnership of research and discovery between the community and the members of the University faculty and staff, student knowledge can be created that directly impacts the citizens of Minnesota.

Teaching and Learning
Aligning community engagement to the core mission of teaching and learning through curricula and programs is integral to establishing its value. Service learning courses are an example of how this alignment is taking place. These courses are not only an opportunity to engage students but to further engage faculty in integrating engagement opportunities into the classroom.

Outreach and Public Service
Closely examining the role of community engagement in research and discovery as well as teaching and learning can serve as a strong catalyst to outreach and public service. Enhanced community partnerships will broaden the conversations between faculty and community members. These partnerships will help faculty realize the research opportunities present in their community and how their research directly impacts their fellow citizens. A strong connection will only help the University meet its final piece of its tripartite mission, outreach and public service.
THE OFFICE FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In the fall of 2001 then University Executive Vice President and Provost Chris Maziar appointed two groups, the Administrative Advisory Committee on Public Engagement / Outreach and the Civic Engagement Task Force, to provide recommendations for addressing key issues in public engagement and outreach. The Council on Public Engagement (COPE) was charged in October 2002 to serve as a catalyst for creative thinking about public engagement, to recognize and encourage activities that strengthen the University’s civic mission, and to provide a clearer assessment of public engagement as an indicator of institutional performance. In 2007 Andrew Furco, Ph.D., became Associate Vice President for Public Engagement and head of the new Office for Public Engagement (OPE).

Under the leadership of the Associate Vice President, OPE works to enhance the University’s activities and stature as a publicly engaged research university. The mission of OPE is to provide University-wide leadership to catalyze, facilitate, advocate, coordinate, connect, communicate, and align engaged initiatives across the more than 200 public engagement centers and units across the five campuses of the University.

Produced in June 2008, the Ten-Point Plan for Advancing and Institutionalizing Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota (Appendix A) presented a set of action steps that support the cultivation of emerging, engaged scholars who will serve as civically engaged leaders, researchers, citizens, and employees. Enhancing students’ public engagement experiences is one of ten key goals articulated in the Ten Point Plan. To accomplish this goal, the Ten-Point Plan recommended the following action steps:

1. Develop a set of strategies for articulating students’ engagement experiences in ways that involve students in increasingly advanced engagement opportunities and that are tied to students’ academic goals and professional aspirations;
2. Offer engagement merit scholarships to students who exhibit extraordinary civic leadership or potential for enormous growth through community engagement;
3. Develop a set of opportunities across disciplines for students at all levels to have educational experiences in environments that are different from their own as a means to build their competence as global citizens and leaders;
4. Cultivate and garner support for more courses that build students’ capacity to conduct community-based research and research in the public interest;
5. Develop a University-wide strategy or initiative that makes engagement an important part of every student’s educational experience;
6. Cultivate and garner support for more discipline-based service-learning courses.

STUDENT SOCIAL PLATFORM INITIATIVE PEL PROJECT

The Initiative examined by this project stems from the social platform idea emphasized in the first action step of the Ten Point Plan and connected to the other five action steps.

As described in the project plan presented by OPE (Appendix B), the Initiative seeks to build on existing programs that have in place engagement activities that are articulated horizontally (across disciplines and courses) and vertically (across years). In addition, the goal of the Initiative is to facilitate students’ accomplishment of key, University-wide educational goals including but not limited to: (a) students’ achievement of the Student Learning Outcomes; (b) students’ achievement of the Student Development Outcomes; (c) internationalizing the University curriculum; (d) enhancing undergraduate students’ research abilities; (e) enhancing students’ understanding of course curriculum; (f) cultivating students’ talents, interests, and leadership; and (g) preparing students for the workforce.

The scope of this project was limited to assessing the viability, interest and feasibility of adopting the Initiative on the Twin Cities campus of the University for full-time undergraduate students within freshman-admitting colleges (Appendix C). In this context, a student’s “social platform” refers to a student’s personal passion or interests in a community or societal issues (e.g., clean energy, homelessness, child literacy, etc.).
METHODOLOGY

EXAMINATION OF SIMILAR INITIATIVES AT PEER INSTITUTIONS

Research was conducted to determine existing community engagement programs at peer institutions based on the Research University/Very High (RU/VH) and Community Engagement Elective Classifications established by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/). Many of the identified programs are similar in scope and focus to the Initiative and can serve as models for the University in undertaking the Initiative (Appendix D).

This examination illustrates that many of the University’s peer institutions are home to a strong, virtual presence for community engagement. Most of these peer institutions have a central portal or gateway, which students can use to identify engagement activities. These portals not only serve as a gateway for students but also for faculty members interested in community engagement and community members looking to create mutually-beneficial relationships with these institutions.

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

The project team’s primary methodology consisted of qualitative data collection from team-identified and sponsor-suggested stakeholders of the proposed Initiative, specifically University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus students, staff, faculty, and administrators (Appendix E). The team conducted in-person interviews with university employees in the stakeholder groups and focus groups of full-time undergraduate students. The main goals of qualitative data collection were to determine within each stakeholder group the:

- Alignment of the Initiative to core University educational goals;
- Interest in the Initiative;
- Areas of opportunity and potential barriers;
- Key elements for a successful adoption strategy.

The employee interviews were conducted in one-on-one or small group settings with three identified stakeholder groups: college associate and assistant deans, administrators of key units related to student community engagement, and collegiate advisors. The team prepared an interview guide for each of these three stakeholder groups (Appendix F). Each interview covered a common set of questions designed for the group to which the interviewee belonged.
Within the associate and assistant dean stakeholder group, interviews were conducted of those responsible for undergraduate education from every freshman-admitting college on the Twin Cities campus. A total of 14 interviews were done within this group, three with advisors who were suggested by associate and assistant deans because of their high level of student contact, and 19 with other University administrators identified either through discussion with project sponsors, advisors, or by other interviewees.

**Table 1. Stakeholder Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
<th>Colleges / Units Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Associate / Assistant Deans | 14                  | Carlson School of Management  
College of Biological Sciences  
College of Design  
College of Education and Human Development  
College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences  
College of Liberal Arts  
College of Science and Engineering  
UMN Extension Service  
University Honors Program |
| Administrators             | 19                  | Center for Urban and Regional Affairs  
College of Biological Sciences  
College of Education and Human Development  
Community Engagement Scholars Program  
Community Service Learning Center  
GLBTA Programs Office  
Leadership Education and Development for Leadership Minor  
Office for Equity and Diversity  
Office of Faculty Affairs  
Office of International Programs  
Office of Student Affairs  
Orientation & First-Year Programs  
Undergraduate Education |
| Advisors                   | 3                   | College of Education and Human Development  
College of Science and Engineering |

Eight student focus groups were conducted including a total of 39 students. Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained, protocol number 1002E77213, with all interviewers completing human subjects protection training. Consent to participate in the focus group was obtained verbally after individual review of the project description by the participant. Incentives for participation included food and a chance of winning one of three $50.00 gift cards to the University of Minnesota Bookstore. Focus groups were conducted in residence halls as well as student-employee workplaces on campus. A common set of questions was used for each focus group. Focus group participants were asked to complete an exit questionnaire in order to
measure current community engagement participation, interest and motivation to participate in the Initiative, and adoption strategies (Appendix G).

All interviews and focus groups were recorded with the consent of the interviewees and focus group participants.

DATA ANALYSIS

Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed, and transcription files were loaded into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. Seven overarching themes were identified based on anecdotal review of the transcripts prior to analysis:

- Alignment;
- Areas of opportunity;
- Potential barriers;
- Scope of participation;
- Motivation and incentives to participate;
- Buy-in strategy;
- Adoption strategy.

The seven primary themes were further defined into sub-themes for data analysis. To assure inter-rater reliability each transcript was coded by two raters. The results of these ratings then underwent a quality control review by a third rater.

The frequency of themes and common issues identified in the coded sections of the transcripts were reviewed and analyzed by the project team.
RESULTS

STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCES

Thirty-nine focus group participants completed and returned the exit questionnaire. The student classification was fairly evenly distributed among those participating in the focus groups. Nine of 39 (23%) were freshman; 13 of 39 (33%) were sophomores; 8 of 39 (20%) were juniors; 9 of 39 (23%) were seniors.

When asked about recent community engagement activity, an overwhelming majority of the 39 (36, 92%) responded as having participated in a community engagement experience in the last year. Of those 8% not participating in such an experience within the last 12 months, 2 (67%) were underclassmen, including 1 freshman and 1 sophomore.

The 36 respondents with a recent community engagement experience were asked to provide more information about that experience. The vast majority of students (26 of 36, 72%) had 5 or fewer community engagement experiences within the last year. Of the remaining, 5 (13.9%) participated in 6-8 and 5 (13.9%) in 9 or more engagement experiences within the last year.

When asked about the last 6 months, more than half (21 of 36, 58.3%) had no community engagement experience; 8 (22.2%) participated in 1-2 experiences, 2 (5.6%) in 3-5 experiences, and 5 (13.9%) in 6-8.

When asked about the last 3 months, 25 of 36 (69.4%) had no community engagement experience; 7 (19.4%) participated in 1-2 experiences, 1 (2.8%) in 3-5 experiences, and 3 (8.3%) in 6-8.

Table 2. Why Participated in Community Engagement Experience in Past 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All (% of Total)</th>
<th>Freshman (% of All)</th>
<th>Sophomore (% of All)</th>
<th>Junior (% of All)</th>
<th>Senior (% of All)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Group</td>
<td>15 (41.7)</td>
<td>1 (6.7)</td>
<td>4 (26.7)</td>
<td>4 (26.7)</td>
<td>6 (40.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Organization</td>
<td>9 (25.0)</td>
<td>4 (44.4)</td>
<td>3 (33.3)</td>
<td>2 (22.2)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning Course</td>
<td>6 (16.7)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (33.3)</td>
<td>1 (16.7)</td>
<td>3 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>5 (13.9)</td>
<td>1 (20.0)</td>
<td>1 (20.0)</td>
<td>2 (40.0)</td>
<td>1 (20.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Course Work</td>
<td>3 (8.3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (33.3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (66.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Initiated</td>
<td>19 (52.8)</td>
<td>4 (21.1)</td>
<td>8 (42.1)</td>
<td>2 (10.5)</td>
<td>5 (26.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other *</td>
<td>2 (5.6)</td>
<td>1 (50.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* as part of job or other group not represented by previous options
These students reported varied reasons for participating in engagement activities. Nineteen of the 36 (52.8%) who responded yes to having participated in engagement activities within the last year reported their participation as self-initiated; 15 (41.7%) did so as part of their participation in a student organization; 9 (25.0%) as part of a community organization; 6 (16.7%) as part of a service learning course; 5 (13.9%) as part of an internship; and 3 (8.3%) as part of classroom course work.

Regardless of the reason for participating, less than half (15 of 36, 41.7%) reported that their engagement activities are related to one another or centered on a common theme. When asked about the specific theme or how they are related, the answers were as varied as the number of responses. Points of relation reported included academics, future career, and ethnicity. Specific themes represented included health/safety, education/literacy, and immigration.

Seven of these 15 (46.7%) reported identifying a specific area of interest prior to college. Another 6 (46.7%) identified an interest area as a freshman, and 1 (6.7%) did so as a sophomore. One of the 15 did not respond. Generally, all but 4 questionnaire respondents (89.7%) stated that students could/should identify a specific area of interest during the first two years at the University or when an academic major is identified.

Of these 15, 80% stated their engagement activities related to their professional, academic, or personal goals, with a large majority (75%) related specifically to their professional goals.

When asked how they identify engagement opportunities, half (53.8%) reported doing so through a student organization; 30.8% through a community organization; 25.6% through an academic course. These results are not completely consistent with the previously reported reasons for participating, where half said participation was self-initiated. However, a student may have self-initiated participation in a student or community organization because of the engagement opportunities and then was presented the specific opportunities through that organization.

Importantly, 34 (87.2%) of the 39 participants said they would be interested in participating in the Initiative.

ALIGNMENT

Deans, administrators, and advisors shared their opinions and ideas as to how community engagement and the proposed Initiative align with the mission of the University, overall believing that community
engagement aligns directly to our mission. Yet the definition of community engagement and to what extent engagement aligned with the college and/or unit varied greatly. One administrator noted that, “It is very much the responsibility of the institution to be a part of the community and to find ways of interacting with the community to improve the Twin Cities or Minnesota... whether it’s research, whether it’s students’ interactions with organizations or opportunities, whether it’s just University relations to neighborhoods. I think there’s [sic] many different ways the University can do that.” Another administrator who is also a faculty member noted, “Well, there are things that we know that are important, and there are things that we know are central. And I think that it fits into the outreach mission of the University as a whole, but I don’t know... that most of us would think that’s a primary part of the mission of our college. It’s a good thing, but I wouldn’t say that I would classify it right up there with research and teaching.” As these quotes illustrate, administrators and advisors vary greatly in their opinions about what engagement looks like and how engagement can align with the unit specific missions.

Many deans, administrators, and advisors acknowledged that community engagement and outreach are a part of the University’s tripartite mission, but they also stated that it is overshadowed by the teaching and research aspects of the mission. Specifically in times of financial constraint, they cited that teaching and research serves as the core of the mission. One administrator stated, “If you are going to be looking at what is really the primary mission of the University, I think it probably comes into two areas: teaching and learning and research.” This administrator went on to make the point that for community engagement to be relevant it must be integrated into the teaching and learning mission and/or the research mission. Many believed incorporation of community engagement into teaching and learning and research may be a crucial way in which to further implement and incorporate the Initiative into the University’s culture.

Numerous deans and administrators felt that defining mutually-beneficial partnerships with the community is also key to aligning the Initiative with the mission of the University. The value of a land grant institution can only be fully realized by its community stakeholders when a two-way relationship is established. One administrator stated, “Historically, we do have a reputation, right, deserved or otherwise, for imposing ourselves on the communities. We have to begin with the assumption that we have as much to learn from our community partners as to teach them. A community is a place where people go not just to get things but they go to give things, and it’s on both sides of that relationship.” Both parties, the University and its community partners, must define the critical pieces of a mutually-beneficial relationship. As the University strengthens its ability to recognize the
needs of the society it serves and the society can easily recognize the impact of the University’s efforts, a win-win partnership can be established.

There was little disagreement among deans, administrators, and advisors that community engagement, in its many forms, is a part of the student culture at the University, much of which is sustained through the increasing number of students entering the institution with a wealth of community engagement experiences. One administrator noted, “I think one thing that’s very unique about this community, and with a large percentage of our students coming from Minnesota and Wisconsin, is that there is a part of the culture here that understands the value of the social platform, and people are engaged in a variety of different ways.” Capitalizing on this culture of volunteerism within the Midwest and that of the new generation of college students is one way in which community engagement has become a part of University culture. In contrast, very little was mentioned by those interviewed of the culture of community engagement among faculty and staff.

Students themselves recognized the benefits of aligning engagement and volunteer activities with their academic and professional aspirations. Through focus groups students pointed out that at times they may have an interest area outside of their academic path that they have either pursued previously or would like to pursue in the future. In one student’s words, “By having this program I feel like it should just help me start thinking about those [career and professional development] questions and introducing me to further education specifically for me.”

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Deans, administrators, and advisors felt the Initiative would provide ample opportunities within all aspects of the University. Many provided examples of how the Initiative can provide value institutionally through university offerings, increased student retention, and provide students with a myriad of experiences that will help them develop the skills and social awareness necessary for success beyond the classroom. One administrator stated, “I think that this would provide amazing opportunities for all the students who care about social issues and have not found a way to meaningfully engage... really carrying across their entire life as a student and stay with them as they leave and become an alum.” The Initiative is one way in which the University can illustrate its commitment to community engagement to not only students, faculty, and staff of the University, but also to the State of Minnesota and beyond.

Students recognized the Initiative as an opportunity to advance their academic and career goals. Students described the current amount

“Here we’re within a 50 mile radius [of] about one and half million people, and so that’s the group of people that need to know that this is a great institution.”
– Administrator

“Developing yourself as leader, developing yourself as a person, all of these things are critical and important to your education as a person and as someone who is going to contribute to society and be a global citizen.”
– Administrator
of effort needed to get involved on campus and the added benefit of tying volunteerism to academic efforts. They saw it as having the potential to expose students to real-world work encounters through engagement experiences. One student noted, “It would be like trying things out before you do it.” According to one student, “Engineers Without Borders [applies] everything that they learn in the classroom to underdeveloped third-world countries, like to Haiti, so they apply everything they’ve learned throughout the years of school without professors. So it’s really impressive to be able to do that within this community and see the results yourself.”

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Deans, administrators, and advisors saw the introduction of another initiative or student program at the University as one potential barrier to success for the Initiative because of the existing multiple requirements of students. Many felt students have too many requirements today and that another requirement could further impede the challenging goal of graduating in four years. Students who are in colleges with rigid curricula, such as the College of Science and Engineering or the College of Biological Sciences, may not have the available time within their class schedule to take classes that do not meet requirements for graduation within their degree program. One administrator commented, “I think the only concern I can think of from students is time. How much time do they have to do what they’re doing? The curriculum is demanding, and we also really put a lot of emphasis in students getting research experiences. So that’s another thing that is a high priority in the college. So at the end of the day I think some of it has to do with how much time they have.” In regards to the four-year graduation rate, those interviewed felt it was imperative that the Initiative align with existing programs, initiatives, and opportunities to ensure students can take advantage of the Initiative without it taking away from their academic progress towards graduation.

While advisors echoed the barriers voiced by deans and administrators, one barrier uniquely expressed by the advisor stakeholder group was the monitoring and administration of the Initiative. Advisors clearly articulated that they would not have the time nor the resources to be able to keep track of which students met what requirements of the proposed Initiative. Tracking numerous student requirements impairs their ability to administer and monitor degree requirements. Yet, advisors were open to engaging students in an initial conversation about engagement and referring them to an appropriate resource for participating in the Initiative. Thus, they felt some way of administering and keeping track of the Initiative requirements other than by advisors must be created.
Students also expressed concern that their schedules are already too demanding and stressful and wondered how they could fit in the Initiative. Some students cited challenges around deciding in which organization(s) they wanted to get involved due to the overwhelming number of opportunities that exist. Students currently find access to community engagement activities difficult. Navigating and building an easily accessible framework is critical as well to the success of the Initiative.

SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION

Deans, administrators, and advisors shared a variety of opinions as to which students should participate and when, if ever, they should identify a specific social platform. Some suggested this occur as early as the freshmen Welcome Week, while others believed a student should never identify a specific social platform. It was also emphasized that many students have already identified a social issue before they arrive at the University, which they plan to explore as they move through their academic career. Many felt that incorporating some introductory programming into preexisting requirements for students may help introduce the Initiative and initiate exploration of potential social platforms. One administrator described the difficulty in determining when, if ever, a student should choose a social platform by stating, “Students are so different developmentally. Some students have done that [identified a social platform] before they even get here, and I don’t think some students will do it until after they leave. I think it depends on the student, but are there activities that can be used to encourage students to really think about it early on?”

University deans and administrators interviewed did not agree on the scope of participation in the Initiative, but the majority of the responses supported their interest and their belief in the feasibility of its adoption. Some did not think it would be difficult to implement the Initiative at a research university. Some believed the Initiative should be adopted at all campuses. In addition, some believed it should not be a program but more of a concept. Regardless of the specifics, the overall reaction by administrators interviewed was positive.

While deans, administrators, and advisors commented that community engagement is a responsibility of the University as a land grant institution, many admitted that not every staff member, faculty member, university official, or course would be a good fit in working with the Initiative. An administrator responded, “I don’t think it’s our role to actually go down or bubble down and push faculty or departments in any way to do this.” Nevertheless, deans and administrators were hopeful that those who have a desire to be involved with community engagement and have the background, knowledge, and means to do
so could be early adopters of the Initiative. It is clear that administrators and advisors believe the University has a responsibility to be involved with community engagement activities, but who is involved and to what degree they are involved is not as easy to define or determine. Although not all university employees may choose to directly involve themselves with community engagement activities, it is apparent from the feedback that many will engage if the opportunity presents itself. This willingness to participate will have a direct and impressive impact on students.

Students were concerned with requiring participation in the Initiative. They felt that when opportunities are made available and a student chooses to take advantage of the available opportunities, the student is likely to be more invested in the opportunity. If a program such as the Initiative was required or perceived to be required, they would not enjoy it as much and would not likely continue to be involved after the requirement is met. It is important to consider that requiring engagement is contrary to the ethic of volunteerism.

Flexibility was a key component of the student discussion regarding which students and when they would participate. Again, students pointed out that individual aspirations and goals vary greatly among students as to a student’s need for flexibility in best fitting his/her situation. They identified factors ranging from their individual academic or professional goals to schedules during certain years of study.

With the concerns of their heavy course loads and pressure to graduate in four years, a range of opinions were provided by students for implementing the Initiative. Some suggested that engagement activities related to such a platform might be best timed over summers between freshman and senior years. However, other students noted that it would have been easier for them to get involved and identify various social platforms during their freshmen year when classes tended to be easier as well as it being a way to get involved on campus early on in their college careers. Still others felt that it was best to declare a social platform during their sophomore year when declaring a major. These remarks again point to the need for flexibility if the Initiative is to be inclusive of a variety of students.

MOTIVATIONS AND INCENTIVES TO PARTICIPATE

Many deans, administrators, and advisors saw a transcript notation as a potential incentive for getting students involved with the Initiative. One administrator commented, “I think transcript notation is huge. I don’t see the University being anywhere close to where some of the institutions are in terms of co-curricular transcripts, but I do think that you need some sort of significant recognition.” It was suggested that
modeling the transcript notation for the Initiative as done with Community Engagement Scholars Program is one way in which OPE can entice students to participate in the Initiative.

Students expressed a sincere interest in volunteer community engagement activities. In addition to transcript notation, students acknowledge other incentives such as credit-bearing opportunities, a deeper exploration of their academic and professional interests, increased competitiveness in the job market, and social opportunities as five primary incentives to participate.

Overall, credit-bearing opportunities were most important to students when the community engagement experience was connected to their major. In this case they believed it would complement their academic and professional goals. Students also saw increased value if it allowed for opportunities to gain academic credit through individualized study especially if there are courses that would count toward their major or meet liberal education requirements. However, lack of connection to major and credit-bearing options would not stop many of them from participating.

Another incentive for students was the ability to hone their academic and career interests through engagement experiences. As one student mentioned, “I think it can even help give people more clarity in what field they want to go into, especially like freshman and sophomores. When they are still deciding their majors and they can take a variety of platforms, and maybe that can help them decide to see what the real world actually is in that field.”

Students also expressed motivation because they see the benefits of community engagement when seeking employment after college. One student mentioned that the Initiative would “definitely enhance your college experience. It’s not just me studying and not just me researching, but it’s actually go out into the real world and volunteer and see how other people are, because sometimes you get in a little bubble, like the University bubble.” Another student recognized the benefits of participation in the Initiative such as with the potential competitive advantages within the job market, noting that, “I think it might be more beneficial to the students because if we all have this kind of experience on our résumés, that’s going to make us look better when we are competing for positions.”

The social aspect to community engagement was also noted as an incentive. As one student stated, “The other part I think that’s satisfying about it’s like the camaraderie it builds…it was really fun to go down to New Orleans and just work with my friends, my classmates in like constructing the house. So, there are good memories that I have. Part of it is friendship.”
BUY-IN STRATEGY

According to deans and administrators, buy-in must be established across all elements of the University. One interviewee stressed this point saying, “It’s buy-in from top to bottom or from bottom to top; whatever way it has to be, it cannot be one person’s office saying, ‘Gee, we have a great idea, do you want to come along?’ It just won’t work. It may be effective for the people who use it, and that’s fine, but if you really think it’s going to be University-wide it has to come out with a splash.” It was widely expressed that ensuring that all levels and units of the University are considered when adopting the Initiative will greatly aid in establishing buy-in. Another administrator suggested that, “The other issue will be making sure that this is seen as much as an academic affairs initiative as a student affairs initiative. Try to bridge that divide, because I think if this becomes seen as a student affairs initiative it necessarily has less currency than if it’s part of an academic affairs initiative.” Advisors reiterated this point, indicating that they have seen too many new initiatives come and go due to lack of an effective branding and marketing campaign as well as a lack of buy-in across all levels of the University.

It was continually voiced that the Initiative has to demonstrate the commitment of long-term resources. Resources specifically needed for the faculty included time, funding, and the ability to assist in curricular level development. As one administrator put simply, “I don’t think we could just ask them [colleges, staff, and faculty] to do it and not give them the tools.” As students’ interests and goals are varied, some students prefer a more structured approach, and others want to be able to create their own path. One student specifically noted that the Initiative needs to be developed with the ability to adapt to individuals by stating, “There’s [sic] some people who love really structured things, where they meet these requirements and they know exactly how to get a range of experiences or they’re specific experiences, but then there are other people who are a lot more trial and error, like this looks good, maybe I’ll do that now. That doesn’t mean that either of them is less engaged, it’s just that they approach things differently.”

ADOPTION STRATEGY

Relationship to Existing Structure

Many community engagement programs as well as college-based initiatives and opportunities are already available for University students, staff, and faculty. Deans, administrators, and advisors felt OPE must inventory these and mesh pre-existing opportunities with new opportunities if adoption of the Initiative becomes a reality.
Deans, administrators, and advisors described several existing programs or faculty members who could be early adopters and that may serve as a model or as a pilot for the Initiative. Many suggested taking a closer look at the structure and operations of the University Honors Program. Others suggested incorporating ideas of the Initiative into freshman seminars and into the liberal education requirements. Both of these suggestions were consistently echoed as a way to introduce students to community engagement in a classroom environment that also meets a graduation requirement.

During the student focus groups, a lot of discussion took place regarding how the Initiative could fit into existing course requirements such as liberal education requirements or as part of a major or minor. Students suggested that the liberal education requirements integrate engagement opportunities. This could lessen the burden of adding something else to their course load and offer the potential to enhance required courses. They described a number of existing programs, such as the Community Engagement Scholars Program and the Engage! website, as examples of what might fit well with the Initiative.

Students offered varying perspectives on how the Initiative could be integrated within an existing University structure. One student commented, “I think a program like that would be awesome to actually tie together [one’s interests and career goals], especially with people who have random majors. I had a friend who got a minor in art history and then majored in sport business administration. It’d be really cool to be able to tie those together, especially in a community setting.” A current example of a program that is interdisciplinary in nature is Engineers Without Borders. In this student group, students who have various majors come together to partner with disadvantaged communities around the world to improve their quality of life through implementation of engineering projects that prove environmentally and economically sustainable. Other students felt that if the Initiative were part of an existing infrastructure they would likely participate. The number of examples of existing programs provided by students speaks to the need of a flexible program that can complement opportunities in which students are already engaged.

Reviewing the University’s peer institutions showed that many have both a physical and virtual presence that connect community engagement opportunities. These physical spaces serve as gathering areas for the students, faculty, and staff who can find information they may need about programs, initiatives, and opportunities in one central location. Models are provided in Appendix D.

**Marketing**

Overall there were strong negative reactions to the name “Student Social Platform Initiative.” Those interviewed felt a title that effec-
tively demonstrates what the Initiative hopes to accomplish is needed. Many deans, administrators, and advisors mentioned that the title does not describe the Initiative enough or is too reminiscent of a political platform. Students described the term as scientific, intimidating, or associated it with social networking. All interview groups expressed a general concern for the term “social platform.”

For successful implementation, deans and administrators felt effective branding, strong marketing, and an effective communication strategy to broaden awareness of the Initiative is necessary. Students, faculty, and staff must be made aware of the program, its goals, the value-added, the measurable outcomes, and how it fits into existing programs at the University. One administrator noted, “I think it's so hard because the University is such a big place. It is hard to grab people’s attention and for people to know about a new initiative. For something to be successful and to get buy-in from people you need to grab their attention in some way, and you need to be effective in that to bring it up, to surface it, because there’s so much vying for all of our attention and students and staff that would be recommending it.” Students also agreed that a strong marketing and communication strategy is critical for the Initiative.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The project team concluded that the Initiative is feasible at the University and that the interest level on the part of students as well as both collegiate and central University personnel is high. However, the results of extensive interviews and focus groups with students and administrators did yield a great deal of insight into important considerations that could affect the success of the Initiative.

Prior to creating a strategic plan for the Initiative at the University, OPE may want to consider the following recommendations put forward by the project team.

I. EMBED INTO EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE OF COLLEGES, UNITS, AND PROGRAMS

The success of the Initiative will depend heavily on the Initiative's ability to leverage existing resources, programs, and opportunities already in place. This is especially important in times of limited resources. This recommendation could be executed in several ways.

Utilizing existing system-wide requirements is a key way to integrate the Initiative. Most widely endorsed by deans, administrators, advisors, and students was to embed the Initiative into the liberal education requirements. Freshmen seminars were also frequently mentioned as an area to build on or even create a seminar on different social platforms. The benefits of working with these two existing structures include creating a clear fit within the current curriculum structure, accessing students regardless of their college of enrollment, and minimizing new financial requirements.

Capitalizing on existing system-wide technology tools is also necessary. Numerous interviewees felt that harnessing existing software tools such as the Graduation Planner and the Engage! website search tool is also imperative.

Developing co-curricular options is another means of integrating the Initiative. The Community Engagement Scholars Program is one example of an existing University program that integrates students into the community, encourages students to connect their personal interests with their educational goals, and enhances opportunities for student reflection.

Another option for embedding the Initiative into the existing infrastructure is to open up dialogue regarding the applicability of the Initiative within each college separately and piloting it in each one at a time. This would allow the Initiative to follow the culture of the
Working with the University’s central administration to create a curriculum for a freshman seminar that deals with aspects of the Initiative is one way to generate immediate value for both the Initiative and the University. Creating a freshman seminar based on some aspect of community engagement not only gets students involved in the Initiative but also incorporates current data suggesting the more involved a student is during his/her first year of college the more likely he/she is to return for a second year. Thus, the Initiative, incorporated into an already established freshman seminar program, immediately creates measurable outcomes benefiting the University and students by potentially increasing retention.

Freshman seminars can also serve as an opportunity for OPE to lay a strong academic foundation for the Initiative. By enrolling first year students in a freshman seminar that discusses the proper, responsible ways to enter a community, learn about social issues, and how to become involved both as a scholar at the University and a community volunteer, OPE can begin to make available service learning and community engagement for an ever-growing group of students who are knowledgeable about the importance of creating strong, mutually-beneficial partnerships with the community. Creating a freshman seminar that is intentional about discussing how students can become engaged in the local community, how this knowledge transfers into their immediate academic work and professional and personal development, and what they will get out of making these connections are ways in which OPE can incorporate the Initiative into existing infrastructures that have positive outcomes for both students and the University.

Any initiative involving students and courses introduced at the University must tie into existing degree requirements. At this point, the introduction of any new initiative, program, or opportunity must clearly fit within the current curriculum and impact every student no matter in which college or degree program he/she is enrolled at the time. Many stakeholders believe that elements of the Initiative can be met through classes that meet the University’s liberal education requirements. Every University student must complete 23 credit hours of liberal education within the following categories: Arts/Humanities, Biological Science, Historical Perspective, Literature, Mathematical Thinking, Physical Science, and Social Science. These are the liberal education core disciplines effective fall 2010. One administrator stated, “One of the reasons we have the liberal [education] requirements is to get people outside their comfort zone, to understand all
these different facets.” Identifying courses and designing curricula that meet one or more of the liberal education requirements will help faculty, staff, students, and community members identify clear objectives and measurable outcomes of the Initiative.

Using data tied to student retention, incorporating courses into freshman seminars, and designing curricula that meet at least one of the liberal education requirements are all ways in which the Initiative could use existing infrastructure to establish value through clear objectives and measurable outcomes.

A. Supported by Central Point of Coordination

Critical to success will be a central point of coordination with long-term, institutionally-allocated resources. Central coordination will allow for the continuation of successful, decentralized efforts at the college and program level while enabling further development of the Initiative across the institution. Faculty, staff, students, and community members would be provided a resource for information about community engagement opportunities as well as ways for developing mutually-beneficial partnerships. Subsequently, the University’s overall level of community engagement will increase the visibility to the campus community and the citizens of Minnesota.

A logical entity to become this central point of coordination is OPE, which has the opportunity to identify what programs will fall under its purview and leverage these existing programs as the central coordinator. Through long-term, institutionally-allocated resources, OPE can continue to develop existing programs while identifying, growing, and funding other programs that further develop students involved in engagement activities.

A central point of coordination for all community engagement activities will serve as a tremendous resource for students who want to participate. This central location can serve as a hub for community engagement. With a central, coordinating entity, students will know exactly where to go to find answers about how to connect their engagement experiences to their personal and professional goals. Another benefit of creating a central point of coordination is the opportunity to make reflection a part of all engagement activities. If all engagement flows through this entity, it is possible to include reflection on every experience as a part of each activity. Through a central point of coordination students will be able to find meaningful engagement experiences and will also be able to reflect on their experiences. This experience will help students determine if and how engagement fits into their personal and professional goals.
B. Central Portal / Gateway / Clearinghouse

A valuable asset to University stakeholders would be the coordination of a virtual gateway of community engagement opportunities at the University. This virtual gateway would enable students, faculty, and staff to capitalize on efforts across colleges, programs, units, and the community. It also could function as a guide for faculty or staff who are considering incorporating community engagement into their work but are unsure of how to proceed.

Students, however, will benefit the most from using a central portal. As Millennials many students are far more comfortable with online interactions, online sign-up forms, and social networking than previous generations. This central portal can take full advantage of the internet-savvy Millennials to get them involved in engagement opportunities. This central portal can serve as a method to leverage existing programs, put a call out for volunteers, and communicate with students via social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Students are connecting with their colleges and universities through a variety of online forums, social networks, and other modes of mobile technology. By creating a central portal of engagement information and engagement opportunities, students may become more aware of the many initiatives available to them.

The Engage! website search tool is an example of a central portal. Unfortunately, we learned that not everyone is aware of its presence, let alone its potential. A targeted marketing campaign to drive traffic to the site may get University students using the site to plan and coordinate their engagement activities. Adding a feature such as Twitter and advertising this site may help it become a driving force for the Initiative.

Appendix B provides a list of peer institutions that have excellent models of engagement portals, gateways, or clearinghouses. The peer institutions included in this examination have created virtual entities where all interested parties, students, faculty, and community members can look when searching for meaningful community engagement activities. The OPE might consider looking at these institution tools to create a central point of community engagement coordination and/or a virtual entity at the University.

A central point of coordination, coupled with a virtual gateway, would make accessing or developing community engagement opportunities at the University a less daunting task for students. With a central point of coordination and a virtual gateway, students will have two valuable entities to use when seeking out and participating in engagement initiatives. These are places students
can return to as they further their engagement experiences and deepen their understanding of how engagement is affecting them personally and may impact them professionally in the future.

2. ESTABLISH VALUE THROUGH CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Clear objectives and measurable outcomes need to be established and continually communicated in order to gain and maintain the support of the Initiative. Measurements to consider are community engagement activities, grade point average of participating students compared to those not participating, synergy with the University's Student Learning and Development Outcomes, and post-graduation community engagement. Establishing, measuring, and communicating the results of key measures are imperative to establishing the value added by the Initiative. No one will expend resources on something without realizing its value. At the University a proven way to establish value is through clear objectives and measurable outcomes the combination of which will aid in creating student and faculty buy-in for the Initiative.

Creating short- and long-term outcomes is imperative to securing initial and continuing buy-in from students, faculty, and staff at the University. Initiative outcomes must be both short- and long-term and clearly demonstrate positive benefits for the University and students. Students, faculty, and university officials must understand and realize that the Initiative will attract, retain, and graduate students on time. Along with graduating students on time, the Initiative can complement the University’s goal of increasing its four- and five-year graduation rates. OPE must also determine how the University will benefit from adopting the Initiative. Data is available to help build and bolster measurable outcomes. In the short-term, a student who participates in a freshman seminar as part of the Initiative may be so invested in his/her work at the University he/she would never conceive of leaving prior to his/her sophomore year. Building a connection to personal development and career exploration is a long-term impact that the Initiative may create as more students are exposed to a variety of engagement opportunities.

The Initiative can gain further buy-in and value through its intentional alignment with the Student Learning and Student Development Outcomes. Reinforcing these outcomes through courses and engagement opportunities not only creates measurable outcomes but may be a way for OPE to eliminate the episodic nature of engagement at the University.

Defining the term community engagement and mutually-beneficial relationships with the community as part of the clear objectives of
the Initiative is highly recommended. Creating an objective of further developing education as a public good not just a private good of an individual student or institution will enable a cognitive shift of our culture regarding community engagement and its impact. A benefit of this approach is by further defining and establishing the University as a leader in conducting education as a public good justifies further public investment.

3. ENHANCE SUPPORT THROUGH DIALOGUE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AND EFFECTIVE BRANDING

Enhance Stakeholder Buy-in through Dialogue at All Levels
To make the implementation of the Initiative feasible and successful, OPE must seek counsel from all members of the University community. Buy-in at all levels is required to secure strong momentum of the Initiative. Upper administration must make it an institutional goal to have students engaged in community; faculty must see the value of bringing it into their classrooms; advisors must be willing to promote it through conversations with students about the role of community engagement in their university experience; and programs must be able to carry through with meaningful engagement opportunities. Creating synergy among all will lead to the greatest chance of success. As illustrated in this report, many members of the University community felt the implementation of the Initiative is feasible, but further consultation and coalition building and inclusion of a variety of stakeholders will be needed to build positive momentum. Along with members of the University community, OPE must work with community members to determine their needs, identify what type of participation is applicable to them or for them, and work to develop an initiative that will create a mutually beneficial partnership.

Construct an Effective Communication Strategy and Branding Campaign
An effective communication strategy and marketing campaign is necessary for the success of the Initiative. The Initiative’s name needs to be changed to better reflect the goals, objectives, and purpose so that the Initiative can be easily understood by others. Most stakeholders interviewed stated that the name “Student Social Platform Initiative” did not adequately express the purpose of the Initiative and may invoke a political initiative rather than a community engagement initiative. Along with allusions to political platforms, many other stakeholders expressed concern regarding the Initiative’s nondescript name, lack of a catchy name, and generality of the name. Exploring a name which can effectively brand the Initiative will be a vital piece to implementing the Initiative. Many references where given to the “Driven to Discover” campaign as a model of effective branding. We strongly recommend seeking student input in the naming of the Initiative, possibly utilizing diverse student focus groups to come up with a new name.
Part of the communication strategy needs to focus on helping University faculty, staff, and administrators not only understand what community engagement is and how it adds value but recognizing the desire of the new generation of students to be engaged citizens. Incoming students are more engaged before they step foot on campus than ever before. They have started non-profits, volunteered extensively in their communities, and are civically aware. Additionally, new technologies enable students to reach newfound levels of awareness of the world in which they live. These technologies are new tools for the University to use capture the attention of students and capitalize on their personal passions, desires, and goals while linking them to their professional development and academic pursuits. The result is graduates who are connected to their University, their community, and who have established leadership qualities that enable them to pursue opportunities aligned with their personal and professional goals.

4. ENCOURAGE STUDENT, FACULTY, AND STAFF PARTICIPATION THROUGH INCENTIVES

The institutionalization of community engagement into the academic culture of the University can happen through the use of incentives for students, faculty, and staff. Below are ideas to begin a discussion to further establish the Initiative through meaningful dialogue with the University community.

Faculty, staff, and college participation can be encouraged through incentives of enhancing infrastructure and creating recognition for community engagement tied to the Initiative. Refining faculty promotion and tenure codes to further institutionalize engagement is an additional incentive for faculty participation.

Another incentive for faculty, staff, and college participation is training. OPE can not expect faculty, staff, and college buy-in to teaching service learning courses, encouraging participation in the Initiative, or creating lasting, mutually-beneficial community partnerships without proper and effective training. When discussing the Initiative with faculty, staff, and college personnel, a detailed training plan should be in place. Everyone will need training to make this an effective initiative for students. Working with the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University is one way in which OPE can design and implement a training to incentivize participation in the Initiative.

Student incentives such as offering transcript notation, developing credit-bearing opportunities, tying engagement experiences to academic and professional interests, demonstrating their increased competitiveness in the job market, and offering an opportunity to build
a social network should all be explored. By having a handful of core incentives, students will be attracted to participate in the Initiative for various reasons.

Employers are becoming increasingly vocal about what they expect students to know upon graduation from college and their entrance into the workforce. Rankings such as percentage of graduates hired immediately following graduation, graduates working in their field or study, and graduates who go on to professional schools are all numbers the University carefully monitors. The Initiative’s varied personal and professional development opportunities are incentives to both students and the University. Participation in the Initiative and a variety of engagement opportunities enhances a student’s employability and illustrates to potential employers that a student has the ability to apply what he/she learns in the classroom to real-life situations. These skills, coupled with real-world experience, are valued commodities for graduates. Working with the various career offices on campus, including the Center for Academic Planning and Exploration, OPE can leverage the skills students build when participating in the Initiative to encourage participation and employers to recruit, and ultimately, hire graduates who participate in the Initiative.

5. ENABLE STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A VOLUNTARY AND FLEXIBLE INITIATIVE

OPE must creatively establish incentives that foster students’ interest and motivation to engage with and in the community throughout their academic careers. There is not a one-size fits all approach when it comes to engaging students. Thus, the University must make opportunities readily available and accessible, and creatively offer a means of integrating engagement experiences into credit-bearing opportunities through individualized study. Students must not view the Initiative as yet another box to check-off for their major or another requirement to meet. Rather, students must see the Initiative as an accessible program open to them at any time during their academic career. This accessibility and flexibility will make the Initiative available to all students, no matter their college, program of study, or year in school.

Interest in the Initiative could be generated through University admissions even before students arrive at the University. Once they arrive, the first exposure to community engagement at the University through the Initiative can be at Welcome Week. Accessibility to the Initiative could be embedded through the liberal education requirements and freshmen seminars as mentioned previously. Career and academic advisors can help students access it in an effort to achieve professional and personal goals though the Initiative. The multiple
points of access described above, which were mentioned by all stakeholder groups, along with additional points of access should work together to create a voluntary, easy to access, and flexible initiative.
CONCLUSION

The impact of successfully meeting the outreach and public service aspect of the University of Minnesota’s mission relies on opportunities that are flexible, intuitive, and involve mutually-beneficial relationships with community partners. The public must be able to draw correlations between the University’s research, teaching, and outreach efforts and the positive impacts these have on the communities the University serves. The Initiative, when given strong support from a central point of coordination and recognition as a means for the University to fulfill its tripartite mission, has the ability to further enhance the University’s efforts related to outreach and public service.

Opportunities for continued involvement with the community, through research and discovery, teaching and learning, and service and outreach are ripe at the University. As financial setbacks continue to constrict the University, administrators must strive to strengthen mutually-beneficial relationships with community partners. The strengthening of these relationships will not only provide for additional research, teaching, and outreach opportunities in the future, but also illustrate to the citizens of Minnesota that its flagship, land grant institution is creating knowledge that benefits everyone.

Based on the feedback the project team received through extensive interviews and focus groups, we concluded that the Initiative is feasible at the University and that the interest level on the part of students as well as both collegiate and central University personnel is high. However, the results provide beneficial insight into important considerations that could affect the success of the Initiative if it is implemented. We encourage OPE to carefully consider these recommendations and other input from the University community if the Initiative moves forward.
APPENDIX A

Ten Point Plan for Advancing and Institutionalizing Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota
A Ten-Point Plan for Advancing & Institutionalizing Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota
A Ten-Point Plan for Advancing and Institutionalizing Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota

At the University of Minnesota, substantial progress continues to be made in advancing the infusion of public engagement into the research, teaching, and service activities of the University's five campuses.

The University community continues to put in place a number of structures and systems that support the advancement of public engagement. Over the last few years, the University community has (1) reorganized departments and colleges to facilitate interdisciplinary work; (2) provided financial incentives, seed grants, and other resources to create and implement new engagement initiatives and expand existing engagement initiatives; (3) reframed promotion and tenure guidelines to articulate more expectations for interdisciplinary and engaged scholarship; (4) established a systemwide Office for the Public Engagement and the position of Associate Vice President for Public Engagement to advance the engagement agenda across the five University of Minnesota campuses; (5) established a Community Leadership Minor and a Community Engaged Scholars Program to provide interested students with articulated opportunities to tie public engagement work to their academic majors and goals; and (6) initiated the design of a university-wide database of engagement initiatives and activities as a means to account for the range and scope of engagement activities as well as to assess the impact of engagement initiatives on students, faculty, the institution, and the community.

Building on these and other existing engagement efforts and initiatives, today’s agenda for public engagement seeks to maximize the potential of public engagement as a strategy to accomplish key University-wide goals including: (1) expanding successful innovative practices that advance the University’s international rank as a top research university; (2) producing cutting edge, significant research that provides insights into some of the most complex and difficult issues in society; (3) ensuring high quality teaching across the academy; (4) securing a more articulated curriculum that supports students’ development as scholars, researchers, leaders, and engaged citizens; (5) advancing opportunities for interdisciplinary research and teaching; (6) making contributions to the local urban agenda in ways that parallel the successes of the University’s contributions to the state’s rural agenda; (7) advancing the internationalization of the University by expanding opportunities for transnational research, teaching, and service; and (8) building opportunities for students and faculty to work in diverse, multicultural settings.

To further the advancement and institutionalization of public engagement, the Associate Vice President for Public Engagement has put in motion this ten-point plan, which articulates specific tasks to be completed in the next phase of the University’s public engagement work. The plan presents a bold agenda that includes: (1) establishing a more systematic approach to the accounting and assessment of the hundreds of engagement activities, programs, and
initiatives across the university; (2) cultivating stronger, sustainable community connections in ways that address the most pressing immediate and longer-term needs of society; (3) supporting University personnel, programs, and centers involved in engagement work in the development of their expertise and prominence as national and international leaders in the engagement field; (4) providing and supporting opportunities for individuals, departments, centers, units, etc. from across the university to convene and share their work and expertise, to cultivate new collaborations (e.g. new interdisciplinary initiatives, etc.), and to build alliances that enhance each participants’ capacity to advance his/her work; (5) garnering extramural funds that support new engagement initiatives and programs; (6) raising the University of Minnesota’s status as one of the leading engaged research universities in the world; (7) expanding the University’s leadership role in national and international engagement networks; (8) supporting, implementing, and evaluating innovative public engagement initiatives that advance the university’s key institutional priorities; (9) supporting the cultivation of emerging engaged scholars who will serve as the civically engaged leaders, citizens, employees, and researchers; and (10) developing, supporting, and implementing strategic initiatives that raise the status and legitimacy of engaged scholarship in ways that promote the advancement of the University of Minnesota as top research university.

Based on the goals of the plan, the Council on Public Engagement (a broad-based university and community group that advises the Associate Vice President for Public Engagement) is working to develop policy proposals that will advance the agenda of the Ten-Point Plan. This work will be completed by a set of Task Forces (working groups) that will be composed of members of the Council on Public Engagement and other key individuals. Each Task Force will develop a set of policy recommendations that will then be proposed to and considered by the appropriate university bodies.

In addition to the more internal, University-wide policy issues, members of the Twin Cities campus are co-initiating (with engagement colleagues at other colleges and universities) a regional community engagement collaborative that connects the University of Minnesota community engagement leaders with engagement leaders from other institutions of higher education and community organizations in the local area. Because our institutions’ respective students and faculty serve and work in the same communities and often partner with the same agencies, it is imperative that we find ways for our institutions to work together and share expertise and resources so that the benefits to the communities and the institutions are maximized.

Progress on the ten-point plan will be assessed each year. Modifications and additions to the plan will be made as the University of Minnesota’s public engagement work continues to grow, evolve, and advance. Comments and feedback on the plan are welcome. To provide feedback on the plan or to learn more about the University’s public engagement efforts, please contact the staff at the Office for Public Engagement at (612) 624-1562 or at visit the website at www.engagement.umn.edu.
1. Scholarly Value of Engagement

Develop, support, and implement strategic initiatives that raise the status and legitimacy of engaged scholarship in ways that promote the advancement of the University of Minnesota as a top research university.

1. Develop a status report of the level of engaged scholarship across the disciplines;
2. Actively recruit faculty and academic leaders to participate existing and new engaged scholarship activities and initiatives;
3. Hold a series of departmental institutes that engage departmental teams in the development of strategic plans for infusing engaged teaching and the scholarship of engagement into the overall goals and practice of the discipline;
4. Develop a webpage that lists various disciplines engaged scholarship criteria, paradigms, and expectations;
5. Establish University awards that honor outstanding engaged scholarship;
6. Develop a University policy and system for nominating University personnel for internal and external engagement awards;
7. Work with deans, department chairs, and personnel review committees in developing clarity, expectations, and criteria for engaged scholarship, as it pertains to the current faculty promotion and review guidelines;
8. Recruit outstanding engaged scholars at the University to serve as spokespersons for engagement and to demonstrate different ways of developing an engaged scholarly agenda;
9. Develop criteria for reviewing and optimizing the quality of service-learning courses, internships, clinical practica, and other community-involved educational experiences.

2. Accounting and Assessment

Establish a set of systems for accounting and assessing the broad range of engagement activities, programs, and initiatives across the university.

1. Identify and review current approaches that units, departments, and programs are using to assess the scale and scope of their engagement initiatives;
2. Identify areas where engagement data can be aggregated across programs and units;
3. Work with the Office for Institutional Research and other appropriate units to identify places in which engagement survey items can be inserted into existing questionnaires and data collection processes;
4. Mine existing data from engagement surveys and research and document areas of impacts that are being measured as well as gaps in knowledge;
5. Establish an agenda for measuring specific longitudinal impacts and trend outcomes of engagement as they pertain to students, faculty, the community, departments, and the University;
6. Work with national organizations and networks to identify, revise, and test benchmarking tools for engagement institutionalization;
7. Refine instruments that measure engagement outcomes and replicate studies on engagement to advance understanding of outcomes and impacts;
8. Disseminate findings about engagement participation and outcomes.
3. Student Scholars and Leaders

Support the cultivation of emerging, engaged scholars who will serve as the civically engaged leaders, researchers, citizens, and employees.

1. Develop a set of strategies for articulating students’ engagement experiences in ways that involve students in increasingly advanced engagement opportunities, and are tied to students’ academic goals and professional aspirations;

2. Offer engagement merit scholarships to students who exhibit extraordinary civic leadership or potential for enormous growth through community engagement;

3. Develop a set of opportunities across disciplines for students at all levels to have educational experiences in environments that are different from their own as a means to build their competence as global citizens and leaders;

4. Cultivate and garner support for more courses that build students’ capacity to conduct community-based research and research in the public interest;

5. Develop a University-wide strategy or initiative that makes engagement an important part of every student’s educational experience;

6. Cultivate and garner support for more discipline-based service-learning courses.

4. Community Connections

Strengthen the University’s reputation as a visible, reliable, and present body in addressing the most pressing immediate and longer-term public needs.

1. Conduct an external evaluation of the community members’ attitudes and opinions of the University as a community engagement partner;

2. Continue dialogue and discussions with community partners to assess their needs and issues concerning the University’s partnerships;

3. Engage community members in key decision making boards and review committees pertaining to the establishment of engagement policies and programs;

4. Participate in and give support to community-sponsored events and activities;

5. Develop and formalize short- and long-range plans and action steps for securing community enhancement and development.
5. Cultivating and Supporting Campus Leaders

Support University personnel, programs, and centers in the development of their expertise and prominence as national and international leaders in the engagement field.

1. Institute initiatives that strengthen engagement leaders’ capacity to further the institutionalization of engagement across the University of Minnesota;
2. Develop a leader of leaders mentorship program in which campus engagement leaders are trained to provide professional development and training to new and emerging engagement leaders at the University;
3. Invite national and international experts in engagement to share insights on university-wide engagement institutionalization and development;
4. Cultivate leadership opportunities that enhance P&A and civic service staff members’ involvement in engagement initiatives;
5. Provide opportunities for University administrations to develop their understanding of engagement.

6. Marketing and Visibility

Share the University’s engagement work far and wide through national and international engagement networks as a means to build the University of Minnesota’s status as one of the world’s leading engaged research universities.

1. Support University members’ participation at leading national and international engagement conferences;
2. Develop and study innovative and cutting edge approaches to engagement and disseminate experiences and findings widely;
3. Develop a public relations campaign that spotlights the range and depth of the University’s engagement initiatives through multi-media venues;
4. Market engagement programs and activities in University publicity for admissions, new faculty and new student orientations, staff recruitment, University general catalogue, and website(s);
5. Develop a five-minute promotional video on the University of Minnesota as a premiere engaged research university.

7. Program Alignment

Support, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches that employ public engagement activities as an effective strategy for advancing the university’s key institutional priorities.

1. Develop a strategic plan that lists key university research and teaching initiatives (e.g., interdisciplinary initiatives, undergraduate research, international education, intercultural competence and multicultural initiatives, etc.) and identifies action steps for how engagement can facilitate the accomplishment of those goals;
2. Conduct a study of other universities and their approaches to infusing engagement into key research and teaching objectives;
3. Conduct University-based and community-based focus groups that explore issues and concerns for incorporating engagement in key University initiatives.
8. Internal Networking

Provide and support opportunities that bring together individuals, departments, centers, units, etc. from across the university to share their work and expertise, cultivate new collaborations (e.g. new interdisciplinary initiatives, etc.), and build alliances that enhance each participants’ capacity to advance his/her work.

1. Establish a university consortium of engagement managers and leaders (e.g., Associate Deans, Center Directors, etc.) that facilitates opportunities for engagement managers and leaders to convene and share their work, experiences, successes, and challenges as well as to align their overall program goals;

2. Enhance the policy-making capacity of the Council of Public Engagement in ways that promote key policies that advance engagement at all levels of the University.

9. National and International Networking

Strengthen the University’s participation as a key player in the leading national and international engagement networks.

1. Actively involve University members and partners in national and international engagement boards and associations including IARSLCE, HENCE, CIC, Imagining America, Research One Network for Community Engagement, CCPH, National Review Board for the Scholarship of Education, National Academy for Engagement Leadership, etc.;

2. Engage leading scholars at the University on the editorial boards of leading national and international journals focused on engagement (JPSO, JPA, JSI, MJCSL, JUTLP, Metropolitan Universities, others).

10. Leverage Extramural Funds

Garner extramural funds that support new engagement initiatives and programs, the institutionalization of existing engagement initiatives, and the building of a strategic vision for the University of Minnesota’s development as an engaged university.

1. Seek out foundation funding that strengthens the University’s engagement infrastructure for furthering the institutionalization of engagement into the scholarly and academic work of the University;

2. Strengthen dissemination vehicles that alert University members and community partners to available funding opportunities for engagement work and initiatives;

3. Cultivate a plan to build endowments for engagement, including endowments that support student scholarship, faculty chairs, and University centers.
The University’s mission, carried out on multiple campuses and throughout the state, is threefold: teaching and learning, research and discovery, and public engagement.

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
APPENDIX B

Project Description and Charge
PEL Project Proposal
Student Social Platform Initiative: Enhancing Student Public Engagement Experiences
2009-2010

Project Summary

Currently, many University of Minnesota students (both graduate and undergraduate) participate in a broad range of community engagement experiences that include academically-based activities (e.g., service-learning, community-based research, learning abroad), professional development opportunities (e.g., internships), and volunteer service programs (e.g., community service through student clubs, Greek system, and residence halls). For the most part, however, students’ community engagement experiences are episodic; that is, a large number of students take part in several different community engaged experiences that do not build on and/or are not connected with prior engagement experiences. Research findings suggest that the true impact of community engagement occurs when students have multiple meaningful experiences over an extended period of time. The University of Minnesota Public Engagement Social Platform Initiative is intended to help students build stronger connections across engagement experiences and to tie their community engagement experiences more closely to their academic programs and professional aspirations.

The Social Platform idea proposes the following:

1) Students arrive at the University of Minnesota having adopted a social platform (a social issues in which they are personally interested)

2) During their first year, students meet with other students (through freshman seminars) who have adopted the same or similar social platform to discuss the issue and ways to address the issue academically, civically, and vocationally. The students also meet with faculty and community members working on the issue.

3) During this first year, students begin to identify potential engagement opportunities that will expand their knowledge of and expertise on the issue. They also identify potential ways that their social platform can be connected to or integrated with their academic studies (e.g., through service-learning courses, research projects, etc.).

4) By the end of the year, students articulate a plan that offers them a broad (and preliminary) roadmap on how they will enhance their expertise in and contribution to the social issue over the course of their time at the University.

The intent of this process is that it will spur for students more reflective planning that will help better articulate students’ engagement experiences as they progress through their academic program at the University.

The PEL project will assess the viability, interest, and feasibility of this initiative as well as identify key issues and factors that will ensure the success of the initiative, if implemented.

Background

Enhancing students’ public engagement experiences is one of ten key goals articulated in the Ten-Point Plan for Advancing and Institutionalizing Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota (see http://engagement.umn.edu). Regarding student experiences, the Ten-Point Plan presents a set of action steps that support the cultivation of emerging, engaged scholars who will
serve as the civically engaged leaders, researchers, citizens, and employees. To accomplish this goal, the plan recommends taking the following action steps:

1. Develop a set of strategies for articulating students’ engagement experiences in ways that involve students in increasingly advanced engagement opportunities, and are tied to students’ academic goals and professional aspirations;
2. Offer engagement merit scholarships to students who exhibit extraordinary civic leadership or potential for enormous growth through community engagement;
3. Develop a set of opportunities across disciplines for students at all levels to have educational experiences in environments that are different from their own as a means to build their competence as global citizens and leaders;
4. Cultivate and garner support for more courses that build students’ capacity to conduct community-based research and research in the public interest;
5. Develop a University-wide strategy or initiative that makes engagement an important part of every student’s educational experience;
6. Cultivate and garner support for more discipline-based service-learning courses.

The Social Platform idea emphasizes the first action step, although it has a relationship to the other five action steps.

The initiative will seek to build on existing programs (e.g., the Community Engaged Scholars Program, Global Leadership Minor, Multicultural Education Major, etc) that have in place engagement activities that are articulated horizontally (across disciplines and courses) and vertically (across years). In addition, the goal of the program is to facilitate students’ accomplishment of key, University-wide educational goals including but not limited to: (a) students’ achievement of the Student Learning Outcomes; (b) students’ achievement of the Student Development Outcomes; (c) internationalizing the University curriculum; (d) enhancing undergraduate students’ research abilities; (e) enhancing students’ understanding of course curriculum; (f) cultivating students’ talents, interests, and leadership; and (g) preparing students for the workforce.

**Strategic Questions**

1. What is the general reaction to the establishment of a Social Platform initiative among various key constituents, including faculty, students, department leaders, university administrators, university staff, community members, others? Do the constituents believe the initiative is meritorious, viable, and/or likely to succeed?
2. What do various constituents like or do not like about the initiative? What would they refine or change? What are their key concerns? What are their key hopes?
3. Should the Social Platform initiative be applied to all students or should it be optional to those who want to participate? What are advantages or disadvantages of having an initiative that require every student participate?
4. When should students identify a social platform?....upon applying to the University?...after arriving at the University and reviewing a list of possibilities? .....at any time? Other?
5. In what ways might the Student Platform initiative achieve each of key University goals (listed in a-g above)?
6. What are the best strategies for securing buy-in and participation of staff, faculty, and department leaders in the Student Platform initiative?
7. What are the best strategies for securing buy-in and participation of students in the Student Platform initiative? What are their chief concerns and primary reactions?
8. What are the best strategies for securing buy-in and participation of community partners who partner with student participants in the Student Platform initiative?
9. Are there other comparable initiatives being implemented at other institutions of higher education? What can we learn from these experiences?
10. What type of training will be needed to secure the success of the Student Platform Initiative?
11. How will participating students’ progress and development be monitored?
12. What social platforms would students be allowed or not be allowed to adopt? Would there be restrictions on what students can adopt as their social platform? What might be implications of having restrictions (or having no restrictions)?
13. What assessment procedures are needed to secure students’ success from their participation in the initiative?
14. What are the next steps and recommendations regarding the Social Platform initiative?

**Approach**

(In no particular order):

1) Using the above questions, conduct individual and group interviews of key constituents gather information, data, and reactions from key constituents through individual and group interviews.
2) Maintain ongoing close connections with the Public Engagement Student Experience Task Force (co-chaired by June Nobbe and Leann Melin), which is developing a set of University-wide policy recommendations for advancing the goals of the Student Experience component of the Ten-Point plan.
3) Consider the system-wide implications of the Social Platform initiative (e.g., how it might be operationalized similarly or differently across each of the five campuses of the University);
4) Develop a list of existing programs that might be excellent candidates to serve as sites/programs for the Student Platform Initiatives (e.g., Community Engaged Scholars Program, Global Leadership Minor, CFANS programs, Multicultural Education Major, others). Interview leaders of existing programs to gather their input and feedback on the viability and feasibility of the Social Platform initiative and gather their recommendations for the program.
5) Gather data and information from other institutions of higher education that might be implementing or have implemented a similar initiative.
6) Develop a report that presents findings from the interviews and data gathered, as well as the following:
a) list of key University goals (within and across the five campuses of the University) that might be achieved and/or lost (reduced) through the implementation of the Social Platform initiative;
b) list of key arguments for and against the Social Platform initiative;
c) suggestions for assessment and monitoring of participating students’ progress;
d) key recommendations for next steps, including recommendations for how the Social Platform might be structured, organized, and operationalized;
e) suggestions for existing University programs that would serve as strong candidates as beta (pilot) sites for the Social Platform initiative; and
f) general observations about the viability, feasibility, and interest in the initiative.

**Project Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept-February</td>
<td>Data gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Analysis of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April – May</td>
<td>Draft report presented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Report revised and final report submitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Participants**

Sponsor: Andrew Furco, Associate Vice President for Public Engagement

Team Advisors: June Nobbe, Leeann Melin, Michelle Wittcoff Kuhl

**Bios**

Andrew Furco is Associate Vice President for Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota, where he also serves as an Associate Professor in the College of Education and Human Development and as Director of the University’s International Center for Research on Community Engagement. His research focuses on experiential learning, civic engagement, and service-learning in primary, secondary, and tertiary education systems in the U.S. and abroad. Prior to arriving in Minnesota in 2008, he served for 14 years as director of the Service-Learning Research and Development Center at the University of California-Berkeley.
APPENDIX C

Project Charter
Opportunity Statement

At the University of Minnesota, a student’s community engagement experiences are often episodic; that is, a large number of students take part in several different community engagement experiences that do not build on one another and/or are disconnected with prior experiences. Research findings suggest that the true impact of community engagement occurs when students have multiple meaningful experiences over an extended period of time. The proposed Student Social Platform Initiative (the initiative hereafter) aspires to help students build stronger connections across community engagement experiences and to tie their experiences more closely to their academic programs and professional aspirations.

Project Goals

Following the completion of this President’s Emerging Leaders Project in June 2010, the Office for Public Engagement (OPE) at the University of Minnesota will better understand the feasibility of and interest from the University community in implementing the initiative. Success will be measured through the presentation of data, both qualitative and quantitative, from all major stakeholders at the University. From the data collected, analyzed, and presented in this project, the OPE will be able to gauge the feasibility of implementing the initiative and determine which obstacles are present that may hinder implementation. This project will also identify ways in which community engagement, through the initiative, can be a vehicle or means of accomplishing broader, systemic University strategic goals.

Project Benefits

The primary benefit of the project will be a university-wide assessment of the Social Platform Initiative concept, identification of existing resources, and generation of recommendations for how it might be structured, organized, and operationalized. In addition, the project will yield qualitative and quantitative data that may be useful in directing future community engagement initiatives at the University.

Project Scope

The project team will assess the student social platform initiative’s feasibility for implementation among full-time undergraduate students on the University of Minnesota’s Twin Cities campus. The group will gather data and feedback from students, student organizations, faculty, staff, administrators, and key community members and organizations in the communities in which the University operates. As part of the process of gathering data and feedback, the project team will incorporate a robust assessment of student community participation activities already occurring and how students and other stakeholders perceive student community engagement experiences.
**Project Plan: High Level Time Line**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2009</td>
<td>Finalize key stakeholder list</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2009</td>
<td>Research work on peer institutions completed by grad assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2009</td>
<td>Adopt project charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>Schedule meetings with key University personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>Schedule meetings with students and student organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>Establish detailed methodology, including interview questions and focus group formats</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2010</td>
<td>Complete faculty/staff/administration stakeholder interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2010</td>
<td>Complete student and community stakeholder interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2010</td>
<td>Conduct data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>Develop recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>Create initial draft of report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2010</td>
<td>Prepare presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2010</td>
<td>Finalize report and poster</td>
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</table>

**Sponsor**

Andrew Furco, Associate Vice President for Public Engagement

**Advisors**

June Nobbe
LeeAnn Melin
Michelle Wittcoff Kuhl

**Project Team Members**

Ted Butler, Finance Manager, Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science
Beth Isensee, Undergraduate Student Services Coordinator, International Student and Scholar Services
Alissa Jones, Community Health Coordinator, Health Survey Research Center
Toni Leeth, Senior Administrative Director of Research, Surgical Administrative Center
Michael Werner, Coordinator of Learning Services, McNamara Academic Center for Student-Athletes
Keith Carlson, Operations Manager, Center for Transportation Studies
APPENDIX D

Peer Institution Website Review
Peer Institution Community Engagement Website Reviews

The following is an overview of a variety of community engagement programs in place at University of Minnesota peer institutions. These institutions share the RU/VH and Community Engagement Elective Classification established by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/). Many of these programs are similar in scope and focus to the proposed Student Social Platform Initiative. Including an overview of community engagement programs at peer institutions provides a variety of examples, ideas, and models to which the University of Minnesota’s Office for Public Engagement can look to as implementation of the Student Social Platform Initiative begins. For the purposes of clarity and consistency, the term community engagement will be used throughout this portion of the feasibility report. Community engagement encompasses the terms public engagement and civic engagement, both of which are used frequently, and interchangeably, at University of Minnesota peer institutions to describe their engagement efforts.

In 2006, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching introduced the Community Engagement Elective Classification. Those institutions that share the same classification as the University of Minnesota, RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity), and any of the Community Engagement Elective Classifications\(^1\), were researched for this portion of the feasibility report. A list of 2008 Classified Institutions can be found at http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/. The 2010 classification will be released in December, 2010.

**U of M peer institutions with any of the Community Engagement Elective Classifications.**

**Colorado State University (http://tilt.colostate.edu/sl/)**
Most engagement opportunities, initiatives, and programs are offered through The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT). The TILT website is set-up as a clearinghouse of information for faculty, students, and staff. A premier program offered at CSU, in collaboration with TILT, is The Public Service Scholars Program (PSSP). The PSSP is “an academic learning community that supports sophomore and junior level ‘community-engaged’ students interested in linking their passion for social change with academic study in their major” (http://tilt.colostate.edu/sl/students/pssp.cfm). This program shares many of the same goals and objectives as the proposed Student Social Platform Initiative.

**Duke University (http://civicengagement.duke.edu/main/)**
The Duke Center for Civic Engagement (DCCE) serves as “a clearinghouse for local volunteer opportunities for students through its DCCE-Durham Programs.” Along with being a clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities, the DCCE is also home to two of Duke’s signature engagement programs, DukeEngage and Coach for College. DukeEngage “provides full funding

\(^1\) Institutions can earn the Community Engagement Elective Classification in the following areas: Curricular Engagement, Outreach and Partnerships, and the combination Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships.
for select Duke undergraduates who wish to pursue an immersive summer of service in partnership with a U.S. or international community” (http://dukeengage.duke.edu/). Coach for College is a global initiative to promote higher education through sports. Although these two programs, DukeEngage and Coach for College, are the DCCE’s signature engagement program, its webpage provides a variety of engagement opportunities for students, both in Durham, NC and beyond.

Georgetown University (http://csj.georgetown.edu/)
Due to its Jesuit affiliation, much of Georgetown University’s programs center around the topics of social justice and service to the Washington, D.C. community. The Center for Social Justice is the hub of community engagement opportunities, initiatives, and information. Students can become Community Leaders and work to make positive social change in the community through this program (http://socialjustice.georgetown.edu/leaders/). The Community Leaders program appears to be the signature engagement opportunity that can incorporate teaching, learning, and service into the Georgetown University student experience. The Center for Social Justice also attempts to partner faculty, students, courses, and community-based organizations to make social change. Between the Community Leader program and the Center for Social Justice’s desire to partner faculty, students, courses, and community-based organizations to make social change, much can be learned from the work being done at Georgetown University as the Student Social Platform Initiative is implemented at the University of Minnesota.

Iowa State University (http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ http://www.hs.iastate.edu/lde/)
Community engagement at Iowa State University is available primarily through the university’s extension offices. The focus of these extension programs centers on business and industry, community economic development, and other agricultural topics. Most other engagement opportunities are offered through the College of Human Sciences, which limits the amount of students who can get involved with many of the engagement opportunities available at Iowa State University.

The Ohio State University (http://www.osu.edu/outreach/)
The Ohio State University’s Outreach webpage serves as a “gateway to the programs, resources and partnerships through which Ohio State engages with communities across the street and around the globe.” This site provides OSU students with a OneStop type menu of all engagement opportunities available to them, locally and globally.
An Outreach and Engagement Database also exists at the Ohio State University. In this Outreach & Engagement Database, members of the OSU faculty and staff can enter their outreach and engagement projects and community partnerships can find information about projects that connect the university to the community. This is a valuable resource and one OSU highlights often on its web pages. The Office of University Outreach and Engagement also has a page that catalogs all college and unit Outreach and Engagement web pages.

Pennsylvania State University (http://www.outreach.psu.edu/)
All PSU searches for engagement, public engagement, civic engagement, and student engagement direct users to the university’s outreach page. This page, however, does not have any discernable links to student-focused programs, initiatives, or opportunities. Much of what is highlighted on the outreach page focuses on opportunities for adult learners, communities, youth,
and organizations. This information is outlined as traditional outreach and extension work expected from the states flagship, land grant university.

**Purdue University** ([http://www.purdue.edu/engagement/](http://www.purdue.edu/engagement/))
Purdue University focuses on Community Engagement and Service Learning as well as the Scholarship of Engagement on its main engagement website. Under each of these headings, students can click on several specific areas to find out more information. Although Purdue does not have an explicit database or portal to all engagement programs, opportunities, or initiatives available to students, it does provide links to many engagement activities. The Office for Community Service and Learning ([http://www.purdue.edu/odos/sao/bvn/welcome.php](http://www.purdue.edu/odos/sao/bvn/welcome.php)) features the Boiler Volunteer Network (BVN), which highlights the many community service needs of the West Lafayette, IN community. Students can sign up for community service projects directly through the website and can look at the “Volunteer HOT NEEDS” page to determine which organizations and opportunities need help from students immediately. This continually updated site appears to be a big draw for student organizations, students who want to get involved with any type of community service or volunteering opportunity, and with students and faculty involved in service learning courses.

**Rice University** ([http://cic.rice.edu/](http://cic.rice.edu/))
Rice University’s Community Involvement Center “seeks to establish a culture of service and an ethic of social responsibility within the University community by developing one-time and ongoing service programs, advising student service organizations, and serving as a resource for students, faculty, and staff interested in community service and service-learning”. The CIC is a useable portal for Rice students to learn more about, locate, and get involved in, a large variety of engagement opportunities at Rice. The CIC webpage provides a Getting Started guide for undergraduate students who are looking for ways to take part in meaningful community service and engagement opportunities. Students can also sign up for the Give-A-Hoot CIC email list that contains “information on one-time and on-going service projects, student service organization events, upcoming programs and speakers, funding of service and community-based research activities, Community Involvement Center program participant and leader applications, and non-profit internship and job opportunities”. The CIC oversees an almost overwhelming amount of engagement opportunities. Everything from one-time volunteering opportunities to extended service opportunities are available through this campus office.

**Tulane University** ([http://tulane.edu/communityengagement/](http://tulane.edu/communityengagement/))
Community engagement at Tulane University is anchored at the Center for Public Service. Since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Tulane has adopted a new, university-wide approach to using its resources to better New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf Coast. The Center for Public Service offers a wide variety of engagement opportunities, offering everything from a Semester in NOLA to international service opportunities. Tulane University students, faculty, and staff also participate in the annual Outreach Tulane community engagement event.

**University of Alabama at Birmingham** ([http://main.uab.edu/Sites/undergraduate-programs/honors_academy/GCLHonors/](http://main.uab.edu/Sites/undergraduate-programs/honors_academy/GCLHonors/))
University of Alabama at Birmingham has a very unique program called the Global and Community Leadership Honors Program. This program exposes students to all manners of
community engagement, both locally and internationally throughout their college experience. This program caters to students who are “searching for a deeper understanding of global and community issues and a way to relate those issues to their own values and goals. Faculty mentoring, specialized courses, service-learning, and international and community learning experiences encourage students to take leadership roles in campus and community organizations. Students also form a community with like-minded peers who share their goals for the future. Together, they investigate, analyze, and seek to understand the many common concerns faced by societies around the world, and they prepare for the leadership roles that can help address those concerns”. This program collaborates with a number of UAB’s colleges and departments, as well as with its many leadership programs.

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign** ([http://engagement.illinois.edu/](http://engagement.illinois.edu/))
The University of Illinois’ Office for Public Engagement created an Engagement Portal. This Engagement Portal was designed to help students “find programs and events provided by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. From this single site you can find events in Urbana-Champaign, throughout the state of Illinois, the region, and the country”. To help students maximize the use of the Engagement Portal, the office holds information meetings to help students familiarize themselves with this tool and learn how to modify its search functions to meet students’ unique interests. Anyone with a University of Illinois login can add a program or event to the listing. Students can also create personalized calendars that feature the programs or events that they selected when using the Engagement Portal. Community partners, or those who do not have a University of Illinois login, may suggest a program or event. The Engagement Portal is not the only source for students to locate engagement opportunities, programs, and initiatives. Many of these are also listed, in a unique and catchy manner, on the Public Engagement home page.

**University of Massachusetts-Amherst** ([http://www.comcol.umass.edu/academics/csl/index.html](http://www.comcol.umass.edu/academics/csl/index.html))
Most opportunities for engagement at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst are through the more traditional outreach services of extension. One program, however, differs greatly from most other offerings. The Community Engagement Program is offered through the Commonwealth Honors College. Although this limits the number of students who can participate, the goals of the program are in line with those of the Student Social Platform Initiative. The Community Engagement Program “integrates academic learning and community engagement to foster leadership development and promote a more just society”.

**University of Michigan** ([http://ginsberg.umich.edu/](http://ginsberg.umich.edu/))
The Ginsberg Center is the hub for all engagement and community service activities, programs, and initiatives. All information needed for a student to get involved in one of the many programs or initiatives supported by the Ginsberg Center is available through the website. The Ginsberg Center works to promote their own programs and initiatives, but also features links to other on-campus departments and units offering service learning courses, programs, and service opportunities. These listings, along with the corresponding programs and initiatives, are categorized into Issue Areas. These Issue Areas offer ideas and topic areas that can be incorporated into the proposed Student Social Platform Initiative’s programming. Along with the many Ginsberg Center programs and initiatives and those offered throughout the University
of Michigan, the website cross-lists these with student service organizations on campus. The Ginsberg Center and its website serve as the central portal for getting students involved in engagement activities at the University of Michigan.

University of New Hampshire (http://www.unh.edu/engagement/welcome.html)
The Engagement and Outreach website is designed to introduce the citizens of New Hampshire to the work done at the University of New Hampshire and how it directly impacts them locally, nationally, and internationally. There is no information related to student engagement programs or initiatives. The only program that receives major attention is the Engaged Scholars Academy, which is designed for faculty.

University of Missouri – Columbia (http://extension.missouri.edu/)
Most engagement opportunities available to University of Missouri – Columbia students are housed in the Extension and Outreach office.

University of South Carolina – Columbia (http://www.housing.sc.edu/studentengagement/)
Much of the engagement opportunities available to University of South Carolina students are through service-learning and a program called The Sophomore Initiative. The service-learning available to students is diverse and the materials available to faculty members details the expectations of what a service learning course should look like, how to beneficially integrate students into the community, and how to make meaningful reflection a part of every course. Resources are also available for community partners. The Sophomore Initiative is another opportunity for USC students to get engagement experience. The Sophomore Initiative helps students transition from their early college experiences to the decision-making and career-defining stages of their college career. Service learning and engagement opportunities are a part of this program.

University of Wisconsin – Madison (http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu/)
The Morgridge Center for Public Service is the central location for all engagement opportunities for University of Wisconsin students. At the website for the Morgridge Center, students can find links to a variety of programs, look for community organizations in need of volunteers, and schedule appointments with service advisors. Students can also find information on programs, such as the Wisconsin Idea Fellowships, student organizations, and service learning courses. Faculty and community partners will also find a wealth of information at the Morgridge Center. The Wisconsin Idea Fellowships “are awarded annually to semester- or year-long projects designed by a UW-Madison undergraduate (or a group of undergraduates) in collaboration with a community organization (whether local, national or international) and a UW-Madison faculty or academic staff mentor”. Aspects of the Wisconsin Idea Fellowships may be applicable to the proposed Student Social Platform Initiative.

Washington State University (http://cce.wsu.edu/)
The Center for Civic Engagement is the virtual and campus home to community engagement at Washington State University. The Center for Civic Engagement brings students, community members, faculty, and staff together to enhance student learning and make a positive impact on the local area. A wealth of programs exists to incorporate WSU students into the local community.
Wayne State University (http://communitychair.wayne.edu/index.php)
Wayne State University provides its students with ample opportunities to participate in urban engagement in the Detroit, MI community. These opportunities come in the “form of service learning courses, workshops, lectures, and trainings on a variety of urban, social issues, and collaborations with faculty as they use cutting-edge research and knowledge to benefit the Detroit community and its citizens”.

Remaining Big Ten Institutions That Do Not Have the Community Engagement Elective Classification

Michigan State University (http://outreach.msu.edu/)
Michigan State University is home to the Engaged Scholar magazine, e-newsletter, and speaker series. MSU is equally as committed to creating engaged scholars as they are to creating engaged students. Students can search a number of initiatives and programs through the main Outreach and Engagement website. This searchable resource also serves as a portal for community partners to discover what MSU programs, faculty, and staff are doing to better the community, state, and world.

Northwestern University (http://www.engage.northwestern.edu/)
The Center for Civic Engagement “promotes a lifelong commitment to active citizenship and social responsibility among students of all ages. Through an integration of academics, meaningful volunteer service, research, and community partnerships, the Center supports students, faculty, staff, and alumni as they enhance their own academic experiences while contributing to stronger communities and a more engaged university”. Students can use the NU Engagement Inventory to discover the plethora of engagement opportunities available to them. The NU Engagement Inventory is organized into five categories: Engaged Academics, Campus and Community Connections, Community-Based Research, Jobs & Internships, and Major Events. Juniors and seniors who have demonstrated a commitment to civic engagement can apply to become a Civic Engagement Fellow and serve as an advisor for undergraduate students who want to broaden their civic engagement horizons.

University of Indiana (http://www.indiana.edu/~pace/)
The Political and Civic Engagement (PACE) program at the University of Indiana may serve as an excellent model for the Student Social Platform Initiative at the University of Minnesota. PACE “prepares undergraduate students for a lifetime of participation in American political and civic life. Its interdisciplinary courses and activities develop their communication, organization, decision-making, critical thinking, and leadership skills; and PACE motivates them to be knowledgeable, effective, and committed citizens. Through PACE, students take part in a wide range of political and civic organizations: advocacy groups, non-profit agencies, political campaigns, branches of local, state, and national government, community organizations, and the media”. Some of the outcomes of PACE are aligned with the Student Learning and Development Outcomes created at the University of Minnesota. The PACE program is the premier community engagement program at the University of Indiana.
University of Iowa (http://www.careers.uiowa.edu/cep/)
The Civic Engagement Program (CEP) at the University of Iowa “underscores the role an institution of higher education has as a member of local and statewide communities. The CEP celebrates students and the commitment and strengths they bring to our campus and the community. We support students by enhancing and encouraging their life-long pledge to active citizenship”. Students can also visit the Civic Engagement Program offices and website to complete a Volunteer Interest Profile to determine not only their interests, but also learn about what types of volunteer opportunities are available that align with these interests. The Civic Engagement Program maintains a Civic Engagement Community Listserv, which it uses to send out information about volunteer events, needs, and resources. The Civic Engagement Program website also provides information for potential community partners and has an extensive listing of service learning courses, course requirements, and links to resources for both faculty and students interested in service learning opportunities at the University of Iowa.

Notable Peer Institutions that do not have the 2008 Community Engagement Elective

University of California, Berkeley (http://calcorps.berkeley.edu/)
The Cal Corps Public Service Center “facilitates partnerships between the University and the community to create educational programs, promote leadership through service, and foster civic engagement”. The website for the Cal Corps Public Service Center acts as a clearinghouse of information for students, faculty, and community partners. Links provide a “Getting Started” guide for students, faculty, and community partners, as well as specific information to make meaningful connections to areas of interest. Most of the opportunities available to students are through volunteering, internships, jobs, and service learning courses. However, the unique set-up of the website makes it incredibly easy for students to select areas of interest and connect to programs that pertain to these interests.

University of California, Los Angeles (http://www.ucla.edu/engagement.html)
UCLA is the only university in the country to offer a Civic Engagement Minor (http://www.communitylearning.ucla.edu/minors.htm). The Civic Engagement Minor “can be paired with any major and is intended for highly-motivated students of any ideological perspective who are committed to service learning, internships and research on public policy issues. It provides students the opportunity to study theoretical frameworks for community building, governance and the use of civic resources. Students in the minor explore traditions of service in our democracy as well as key concepts of social capital and civil society”. UCLA offers its students a vast array of engagement opportunities aside from the Civic Engagement Minor. The UCLA Volunteer Center is the central location for all information, listings, opportunities, and programs available to UCLA students, faculty, staff, and community members. Along with the Volunteer Center, the UCLA in LA Center for Community Partnerships illustrates the university’s commitment to community partnerships and engagement. Another location for students to learn about volunteer and civic engagement opportunities is the Center for Community Learning.

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill (http://www.unc.edu/cps/students-scholars-index.php)
The marquee program at the University of North Carolina and offered through its Carolina Center for Public Service is the Public Service Scholars (PSS). The PSS program “provides a framework for undergraduate students who want to strengthen and maintain their commitment to serving communities throughout North Carolina, the nation and the world. PSS encourages students to learn about and practice public service and engagement beyond the scope of traditional volunteerism, including organizational service, policy and advocacy work, fundraising and philanthropy”.

Appendix Table 1: University of Minnesota Peer Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION NAME</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado State University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa State University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>RU/VH Big Ten Peer Institution without Elective Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>RU/VH Big Ten Peer Institution without Elective Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania State University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulane University</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Alabama at Birmingham</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California, Berkeley</td>
<td>RU/VH Notable Peer Institution without Elective Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California, Los Angeles</td>
<td>RU/VH Notable Peer Institution without Elective Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
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<td>University of Indiana</td>
<td>RU/VH Big Ten Peer Institution without Elective Classification</td>
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<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>RU/VH Big Ten Peer Institution without Elective Classification</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Massachusetts - Amherst</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
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<td>University of Michigan</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Missouri - Columbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New Hampshire</td>
<td>RU/VH Outreach and Partnerships Classification</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill</td>
<td>RU/VH Notable Peer Institution without Elective Classification</td>
</tr>
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<td>University of South Carolina - Columbia</td>
<td>RU/VH Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin - Madison</td>
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<td>Washington State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wayne State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrator Interviews</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Zentner Bacig</td>
<td>Associate to Arlene Carney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kris Lockhart</td>
<td>Associate Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meredith McQuaid</td>
<td>Associate Vice President &amp; Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly Portz</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Rinehart</td>
<td>Vice Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelious Whyte</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert B. McMaster</td>
<td>Vice Provost &amp; Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Coffin Koch</td>
<td>Associate Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Dommer Hess</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laurel Hirt</td>
<td>Service-Learning and Community Involvement Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aaron Asmundson</td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Lingren Clark</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Porter</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Lieberman</td>
<td>First-Year Programs Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Axtell</td>
<td>Outreach Liaison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Phibbs</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will Craig</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole Letawsky Shultz</td>
<td>Director Student Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Doherty</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Advisor Interviews</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>College, Department or Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Pavlowski</td>
<td>Assistant Academic Advisor</td>
<td>College of Education and Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Kampsen</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>College of Education and Human Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Gunter</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>College of Science and Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dean Interviews</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne M. D'Angelo King</td>
<td>Assistant Dean</td>
<td>Carlson School of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael J Houston</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>Carlson School of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serge Rudaz</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>Undergraduate Education- Honors Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary M. Kosir</td>
<td>Assistant Dean</td>
<td>Carlson School of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Ruekert</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>Carlson School of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Underwood</td>
<td>Assistant Dean</td>
<td>College of Biological Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin L. Wright</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>College of Biological Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Maple</td>
<td>Assistant Dean</td>
<td>College of Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi Barajas</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>College of Education and Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay Bell</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris F. Kearns</td>
<td>Assistant Dean</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer A. Windsor</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>College of Liberal Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul J. Strykowski</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>College of Science and Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Senese</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>UMN Extension Service</td>
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<td>College of Science and Engineering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview Questions

Alignment
1. What do you believe is the University’s role regarding community engagement?
   a. Your unit, college or program’s role?
   b. What kind of student engagement initiatives already exist in your area?
2. What is your reaction to the term “social platform”?
3. What is your general reaction to the establishment of a Student Social Platform Initiative?
4. How does this concept align with your college’s vision and mission for the education and development of students?

Feasibility
5. What factors do you believe are critical for the success of a Student Social Platform Initiative at the University? In your college?
6. What opportunities do you see a Student Social Platform Initiative creating for your college, as a whole and its students?
7. What concerns do you have about a Student Social Platform Initiative and specific challenges to its success if adopted?

Adoption
Logistics:
8. How do you see participation in a Student Social Platform Initiative relating to the coursework and education of students in your college?
9. When do you believe students should identify a social platform?
10. Should a Student Social Platform Initiative be applied to all students or should it be optional to those who want to participate? What are advantages or disadvantages of having an initiative that requires every student participate?
11. Do you have any suggestions for other programs we should look at to potentially model an effective adoption strategy after and discuss the feasibility of adopting this initiative?

Buy-in:
12. What are the best strategies for securing buy-in and participation of staff, faculty, and department leaders in your college in a Student Social Platform Initiative?
13. What are the best strategies for securing buy-in and participation of students in your college in a Student Social Platform Initiative? What do you believe would be their chief concerns and primary reactions?
Interviewee Name: 
Facilitators: 
Date: 
Location: 

Agenda

3:30 – 3:35
1. Introductions
2. Description and Goals of the proposed Student Social Platform Initiative
3. Discuss how/why we decided to interview specific individuals
4. Interview protocol (recorders, use of information for Final Report, etc.).

3:35 – 4:30
5. Interview questions
6. Time for additional comments, suggestions for further interviews, recommendation of a student advisor in your college with whom we can speak about this concept

Interview Questions

Alignment
1. What do you believe is the University’s responsibility regarding community engagement?
   a. Your unit, college, program’s responsibility?
2. How might a social platform contribute to meeting that responsibility?
3. Do administrators, advisors, colleagues, faculty and staff see a social platform initiative as a worthy endeavor in an academic environment?
4. What is your reaction to the term “social platform”?

Feasibility
5. What factors do you believe are critical for the success of a Student Social Platform Initiative at the University? In your college?
6. What opportunities do you see a Student Social Platform Initiative creating for your college, as a whole and its students?
   a. Your unit, college and program opportunities?
   b. Students (specific benefits/incentives)
   c. Community
7. What concerns do you have about a Student Social Platform Initiative and specific challenges to its success if adopted?

Adoption
8. How do you see participation in a Student Social Platform initiative relating to the coursework and education of students in your college?
9. When do you believe students should identify a social platform?
10. What types of students do you feel would benefit from such an initiative? Do you feel that it would be beneficial for all students to participate?
11. What thoughts do you have regarding the ability to adopt such an initiative:
   a. What type of training will be needed to secure the success of the Student Platform Initiative?
   b. What options are there for monitoring participating students’ progress and development?
   c. What assessment procedures are needed to secure students’ success from their participation in the initiative?
   d. What are the potential limitations of the social platform idea?
   e. What are some impediments to adoption?
12. Do you have any suggestions for other programs we should look at to potentially model an effective adoption strategy after and discuss the feasibility of adopting this initiative?
Agenda
1. Introductions
2. Why we chose to speak with them
3. Definition of “community engagement” to provide context for discussion
4. Description of proposed Social Platform Initiative
5. Goals of proposed Social Platform Initiative
6. Ground rules: no right or wrong answers, request to record audio
7. Questions
8. Exit questionnaire
9. Close and thank you

Focus Group Questions

Interest and Feasibility
1. Introductory Question (not associated with the topic to help people get to know each other/feel more comfortable talking): (i.e. what are you studying? Year in school? Where you from?)
2. What kinds of community engagement activities have you been involved in (required or self-initiated)?
   a. Volunteerism
   b. Fund Raising
   c. Service Learning
3. How have those activities been connected to each other (e.g., were they centered around the same issue or a common theme)?
4. Do you have a particular area of interest in terms of community engagement activities or social issue?
   a. If so, when did you identify the activity or issue?
   b. If not, what would it take to define an area of interest?
   c. If not, when do you believe you could define one or more areas of interests?
5. What is your reaction to the term “social platform”? Is it meaningful or useful as a way to describe the core area that you are interested in being engaged with?
6. What are your initial reactions to the proposed Social Platform Initiative?
7. What do you think are the benefits of the proposed Social Platform Initiative?
   a. University
   b. Student
   c. Community
8. What would you expect to get out of participation in such an initiative?
9. What would you expect to gain from your participation (e.g., transcript notation, for credit,)
10. Would you have felt prepared as an incoming freshman to get involved with a community engagement initiative like this right away?
    a. When do you think would be an appropriate time for students to get involved in such an initiative?
11. From your point of view, what concerns do you have with this initiative?
12. Would you be interested in participating in a Social Platform Initiative?
    a. If so, why?
    b. If not, why?
13. Thoughts on connecting community engagement to your academic career.
14. Summary; have we missed anything?

NOTE: As needed to get full group participation:
- Use rating questions with a scale of 1-5, How likely would you be to…?
- [Ask participants to hold up fingers]
- So you held up 5, why do you think that?
APPENDIX G

Student Focus Group Exit Questionnaire
Please complete and return to the focus group coordinator prior to leaving the focus group meeting. This questionnaire is confidential, and your responses will not be shared with others or connected to your name.

1. Check your year in school.
   1 ☐ Freshman
   3 ☐ Sophomore
   5 ☐ Junior
   7 ☐ Senior

2. Have you participated in a community engagement activity in the last year?
   1 ☐ Yes (If yes, please continue to Question #2a)
   3 ☐ No (If no, please skip to Question #6)

2a. If so, how many events have you participated in during the last year?
   1 ☐ 1-2
   3 ☐ 3-5
   5 ☐ 6-8
   7 ☐ 9 or more

2b. In the last 6 months?
   1 ☐ 0
   2 ☐ 1-2
   3 ☐ 3-5
   4 ☐ 6-8
   5 ☐ 9 or more

2c. In the last 3 months?
   1 ☐ 0
   2 ☐ 1-2
   3 ☐ 3-5
   4 ☐ 6-8
   5 ☐ 9 or more

3. Why did you participate in the activities? Check all that apply.
   1 ☐ Student Group Activity
   2 ☐ Community Organization Activity
   3 ☐ Service Learning Course
   4 ☐ Internship
   5 ☐ Classroom Course Work
   6 ☐ Self-initiated
   7 ☐ Other: (Please specify) ____________________________________________
4. Were the activities related to each other or centered around a common theme? For example, were all the activities centered around an issue such as poverty, housing, or immigrant rights?
   1 ❑ Yes (If yes, please continue to Question #4a)
   3 ❑ No (If no, please skip to Question #6)

4a. What was the relationship or common theme? (Please specify) __________________________________________

4b. During which year of school would you say that you identified this area of interest.
   1 ❑ Before college
   2 ❑ Freshman
   3 ❑ Sophomore
   4 ❑ Junior
   5 ❑ Senior

5. Were any of the activities related to your professional, academic or personal goals?
   1 ❑ Yes (If yes, please continue to Question #5a)
   3 ❑ No (If no, please skip to Question #6)

5a. If yes, please check all that apply.
   1 ❑ Professional
   3 ❑ Academic
   5 ❑ Personal

6. How do you choose engagement opportunities? Check all that apply.
   1 ❑ Through a student organization
   2 ❑ Through a community organization
   3 ❑ U’s student engagement web site (engage.umn.edu)
   4 ❑ Through course work
   5 ❑ Other: (Please specify) __________________________________________

7. Would you be interested in participating in the proposed Social Platform Initiative?
   1 ❑ Yes
   3 ❑ No

8. When in their academic careers do you think University of Minnesota students could/should identify a platform?
   1 ❑ Freshman
   2 ❑ Sophomore
   3 ❑ Junior
   4 ❑ Senior
   5 ❑ At the time a major is declared

__________________________________________

Thank you for participating!