Kristen D. Skivington

A strong case can be made for supporting outreach as a value-added function in a university. The author describes specific strategies for positioning outreach through developing a power base. From this base of power outreach activities can be designed to assist relevant constituents in meeting their needs.

Positioning a University Outreach Center: Strategies for Support and Continuation

University outreach can be defined in a number of ways and through a number of activities, but the bottom line is to bring to the table all of the university resources possible to make a difference and add value to a community, to a partnership, or to a situation while supporting the mission of the university.

The face of university outreach can be decentralized to the point of individual actions and departmental agendas, or centralized through institutes and centers. The centralized unit may focus on special and narrow topics (e.g., urban policy) or be a broad resource of information and a conduit for university outreach activities. Such a unit is the focus of this article, with the issue being how to develop a base of power and thereby support maintaining a center for university outreach. Positioning of outreach activities and developing an associated mission for a university take an enormous amount of time and effort. This article will identify how to appeal to groups internal to a university in developing support and will also outline lessons learned from an ongoing effort at a small public institution in the Midwest.

Identifying Power and Value-Added Pressure Points

The positioning of outreach activities and an office for the support of these activities can be a managed process. Institutionalization of the office and activities requires building a power base from which to operate and to make a case for continuation. Organization theorists (Hinings et al., 1971; Pfeffer, 1981) identified characteristics of departments that enable them to accrue power and thus survival in an organization. Four determined and planned actions result in increasing the power base and thus the survival of a department.

Enter areas of uncertainty. Organizations face many unknowns in their external environments. If a unit is able to identify areas of uncertainty and reduce the uncertainty, support for maintaining the unit increases. An example is a university introducing a new computer system for the maintenance of all systems information. Those units and individuals who know how the system works and how to put it in place accrue power through their knowledge and ability to reduce uncertainty around the introduction of the new system.

Create dependencies. When a unit has skills, knowledge, information, and materials needed by an organization and not readily available elsewhere, dependency is created. As units begin to rely on the department, the need to keep it in existence increases. By acquiring critical information and skills, dependency on other departments can be reduced. Fund development offices can create dependencies by being the only units allowed to contact potential donors to the university. Departments wishing to initiate fund-raising activities must receive clearance through the fund development office and all funds must be channeled through that office. Creating exclusive control over the process and access to donors results in a dependency relationship with other units that is power-based in the fund development office.

Provide resources. All organizations are dependent upon resources for survival. Departments that can provide money, information, facilities, or other needed resources increase their power base. Government relations officers increase their security by being able to work with legislators to ensure funding streams for a university. By successfully obtaining funding needed by the organization, the government relations officer increases his/her power base and ensures continued employment by the university.

Satisfy strategic contingencies. Some elements internal and external to an organization are especially critical to its success. These elements may include a task to be done or an event. An example is the annual ranking of academic programs by national newspapers and magazines. Some regard these as affecting their recruiting efforts, i.e., that a high ranking improves the number and quality of applicants. Since quality and number of applicants are viewed as an indicator of the quality of the institution, then quality impacts donations, funding, and numerous other elements critical to the survival of the university. The department and individuals able to increase the rating accrue power by contributing to the satisfaction of the strategic contingency of quality.

Constituent Groups

These four methods of developing a power base can be utilized to gain support and involvement for outreach. Five constituent groups internal to a university will have a bearing on positioning and support of university outreach: faculty, staff, students, administration, and alumni. Alumni are diversely defined as internal and external to the university. However, for purposes of this discussion and the potential role they can play in internal mechanisms, they will be addressed as an internal constituent group.

In working with each group, outreach staff can identify how outreach enables each constituency to meet its goals and add value to its own activities. The four bases of power underlie the ability of the outreach unit to significantly and over time contribute to each group and to the overall mission of the university. These groups will be discussed and the potential for adding value described.

Faculty

In order for outreach to be legitimate work for faculty, participation in outreach must result in rewards and recognition. Tenure and promotion consist of evaluation of teaching, research, and service. Typically, primary emphasis is on teaching and research; thus outreach activities must be designed to incorporate and support the tenets of quality teaching and research as defined by the relevant unit.

Initial steps to incorporating outreach into the tenure system might include working with the provost and faculty committees to raise a discussion of outreach, developing a university-derived definition of outreach, and developing evaluation criteria for the review of teaching and research enhanced by outreach.

Outreach personnel add value to faculty outreach activities through support and enabling services. In the case of community-based research, faculty need access to research locations and assistance in developing a partnership with the community in which to conduct the research. Outreach staff may have the relationships necessary to work with the faculty member in mediating the discussion of research objectives and community values necessary for a mutually beneficial outcome. Staff are also able to assist with funding sources, either through the outreach budget or through community partnerships, to support the research project. Faculty engaged in service learning can be given assistance with site selection, design of course objectives, evaluation of the experience, and conducting the reflection sessions.

Further support is provided by assisting faculty with meeting criteria for evaluation and reward of outreach. Support services related to evaluation criteria can include outcome evaluation of a project, documentation of planning meetings, project management reports, budget tracking, and identification of additional funding sources.

Staff

Department goals to be achieved by staff are potential pressure points for outreach. In identifying opportunities for outreach to contribute to the goals of a unit or staff member, the basis for evaluating the unit and personnel should be reviewed. If the admissions department is evaluated on the basis of the quality and quantity of students admitted to the university, making the department aware of and involving them in outreach with potential students addresses their goals. Examples include service learning programs that attract and retain students, involving admissions in relationships with K-12 schools and systems, and making the department aware of relationships with other pools of potential students.

As with any other constituent, staff units often need funding to accomplish goals, and the outreach office may be able to provide financial assistance. Additional support can come through co-sponsoring activities that promote the unit and by contracting for services from the unit. In other cases, a unit can require technical assistance in order to operate more effectively, or a provision can be made to train a staff person. The outreach office may be able to arrange for each, enabling the unit and personnel to function more effectively.

Students

Adding value to the student experience includes providing opportunities for learning, funds for educational expenses, and access to jobs upon graduation. Outreach can address all three through service learning initiatives. Learning occurs through academically-based projects that are incorporated into courses, but also through noncourse service activities. Such opportunities include the establishment of issue groups, student-run groups of students interested in learning more about a social topic and developing activities to address a particular issue. Additionally, service projects in the community—with or without stipends—and independent study assignments meet needs and add value to students.

Funding for college is a critical area for students, and outreach activities provide a possible means for students to earn money for expenses. Assignments outside of classroom work can be structured with a stipend for the service provided. The stipends are not a salary or the equivalent of an hourly wage, but dependent upon completing a set number of service hours. Stipends are paid by the agency providing the placement or through special funding from the university or a grant source.

A second fund-generating outreach activity for students is work-study programs that include community service placements. The America Reads program is one in which students are literacy tutors in local schools. Federal work-study programs have requirements for eligibility, but can provide funds as well as academically based and meaningful community outreach.

A third value-added dimension of outreach that appeals to students is the ability to gain experience that will enhance job prospects. Employers are looking for community service, extra-curricular activities, and skill-building experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Through outreach or service learning, students can join a team conducting applied research with the community, work with a faculty member on a technical assistance project, or assist a businessperson with a business plan. These activities provide students with opportunities to develop interpersonal, project management, and technical skills.

The outreach office can serve as the conduit for making these experiences possible. By establishing a contact point for students, the office can maintain a database of those interested in community-based experiences and those wanting to form or be involved in issue groups. Through its funding mechanisms and management of the logistics, the office can provide assistance with work-study programs and America Reads. Through interaction with other outreach activities, the office can coordinate student involvement in technical assistance projects. Finally, the office can work with other university units (e.g., cooperative education and internships) to identify students for these programs as well as assist with arranging sites for such experiences. These tasks and services will vary depending upon the institution's overall approach to outreach and service learning.

Outreach activities naturally address student interests in learning, funding, and relevant experience. These positive experiences carry over into students' relationships with the university as alumni.

Alumni

Alumni have a desire to give back to their institution and community through involvement in the academic experience of others and by donations of funds and expertise. Universities capitalize on alumni affiliation by acknowledging the value of the education gained by alumni and the experience and expertise they have developed since leaving the institution. Recognition of both is possible through multiple levels of involvement in outreach.

Alumni are attracted to programs that they feel make an impact on the lives and abilities of others. The university is a mechanism for making a difference in a community and region. As Ramaley and Withers (1997) observe, donors to urban universities often support the institution because of its "economic, cultural, and social value to the community" (p. 4). Forms of outreach may attract personal, professional, and financial support. In turn, expectations of the role of the university in outreach support the activities and values of the alumni.

There are multiple entry points for involving alumni in outreach: alumni are a wonderful source of expertise when used as speakers in university/community programs, as mentors for students, and as technical assistance providers for community-based organizations and businesses.

To bring alumni into the outreach resource base, an outreach center can develop contacts with alumni, an inventory of skills and abilities, and mechanisms for contacting the center to express interest and availability for outreach. Training may be provided by staff to prepare alumni for experiences internal and external to the university.

Existing units on campus can be charged with developing programming and managing alumni relations. These units usually have the information needed for contacting alumni and must be partners with an outreach office. The outreach office is also a resource for alumni as well as for internal units dependent upon alumni involvement with and perceptions of the role of the university in the community.

Administration

Administrators are under pressure to provide evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of the academic mission. Recruitment, retention, and graduation rates frequently serve as indicators of success of the academic process. Outreach initiatives can play a critical role in supporting and enhancing these outcomes.

As more school districts enact graduation requirements that include community service, students are looking for a continuation of community involvement in their next educational experience, so that service learning programs, service learning scholarships, and community work-study assignments are effective recruiting tools. Encouraging students to transfer from a local two-year college may be easier with a service learning program that links the two schools; start service learning in one institution and transfer the experiences and stipends to the next.

Administrators are also concerned with budgets. Again, Ramaley and Withers (1997) make a case for community outreach as a viable fund development strategy when programs add value to the community and the university. Administrators must also speak with legislators about the outcomes and contributions of the university to the state and community. With the public calling for program assessment, outreach activities that are rigorously evaluated and identified as serving the region, adding value to the community, enhancing the educational experience of students, and increasing the effectiveness of teaching, research, and learning are powerful arguments for funding and development of our metropolitan institutions.

Outreach is not conducted for the purpose of community relations but for the purpose of developing mutually beneficial partnerships that enhance the capacities of all partners and recognize the value and expertise of all. When evaluated for these outcomes and found to result in these outcomes, a strong argument can be made for the support and funding of outreach as a mechanism for meeting the strategic contingencies of the university and the community.

An outreach center can support the goals of and add value to the work of administrators by evaluating outreach activities as they relate to recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students, the impact of outreach on the community, and the improvement of teaching and research.

A Word about the Community

The successful positioning of outreach within a university is relevant to the external community. Too often efforts are made by a university to reach out to its surrounding area only to pull back when funds disappear, interests wane, or the underlying motivation is discovered to be less than complimentary to the community.

When efforts are proven to be mutually beneficial and respectful, the community can be an ally in providing support to those working with the university. The community can make its expectations known to funders, and administrators, and rally others through its voice and resources.

The outreach office can make a case for being the intermediary between the university and community, facilitating access and spanning the boundary between the two. Filling the role of resource provider, reducing the uncertainty of interactions, and enabling the meeting of strategic contingencies usually positions outreach and the office as critical elements in a successful partnership of community and university. In addition, because the university is often seen as a mysterious bureaucracy by the community, a center approach can provide ease of access and communication between university and community.

Summary

Identifying the pressure points, or goals, of the relevant constituent groups within the university and community is an important step in developing a strategy for positioning university outreach as a viable and ongoing activity. Outreach activities can be designed to address the pressures felt by each group by helping them to achieve their goals, so that the outreach center becomes a value-added unit rather than a drain on resources.

Assisting others to reach their goals is possible through the resources of the outreach office: knowledge, information, materials, and money. These resources and the wise use of them enable the office to develop a power base to be used as a benefit for the university and community.

The following section describes the evolution of the Center for University Outreach at the University of Michigan-Flint and resulting lessons for positioning outreach as a viable activity for each constituent group.

Development of an Outreach Center

The University of Michigan-Flint is located in downtown Flint, Michigan, and offers undergraduate and masters-level programs to a commuter-based campus population of 6,300 primarily part-time students. Though established 40 years ago through the lobbying efforts of local citizens, the university did not have a history of involvement with the community, until the establishment of the Community Stabilization and Revitalization (CSR) project in March 1994.

CSR was a grant-funded initiative designed to provide technical assistance to businesses and nonprofit organizations in Genesee County through the expertise of university faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The City of Flint received a combined total of $1.2 million from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for the 18-month program. The university was designated a sub-grantee to the city and made responsible for carrying out the objectives of the program, i.e., providing all assistance and managing the daily operations.

One goal of CSR was to increase awareness in the community that university personnel, students, and alumni are capable of applying knowledge to community and organizational issues. Prior to CSR, any projects, assistance, or interaction with the community and organizations were on an individual basis with faculty, dependent either on a prior relationship or on luck in calling the right department and finding someone with whom to work. CSR created an entry into the university system, removing the randomness and chance of successful contact.

The office consisted of a director, a secretary, and two program managers, one for technical assistance projects and one for workshops. The physical location was one block off campus because there "just wasn't space on campus" for personnel. The university is a self-contained physical plant with a history of placing less-central activity off-campus; the location thus implied that the project was of less than central importance to the university. It was also impossible to tie the phone system to the university system, preventing people from forwarding calls to or from the university, which presented some slight barrier for interaction with the campus and reinforced for some that the operation was not really a university activity. We were, however, networked through the university computer system and did hold all meetings with faculty on campus in order to make contacts as easy as possible. The off-campus location did provide easier access for the community, although we rarely held meetings in our offices.

Operationally, CSR was designed to provide technical assistance through three programs: project-based assistance, workshops, and extended assistance called "faculty-on-site." In each case, the project managers were to identify faculty, staff, students, and alumni to be hired for their expertise to work with an organization requesting assistance; CSR staff did not do the projects. Assistance was provided on a cost-share basis, in which the cost for the organization was a percentage of the total cost of the project. Costs included materials, travel, and time: there was no administrative charge. Grant funds substantially underwrote the cost of the projects, e.g., a nonprofit would pay ten percent of a project costing up to $20,000, a for-profit would pay twenty percent for the same project cost.

Project-based assistance was in response to a request from an organization via an application form. The most frequently requested areas of assistance were strategic planning, market planning, computer information systems design, program evaluation, and cash-flow analysis.

Workshops were initially expected to be a feeder system for projects; people attending workshops were expected to apply for project assistance with their particular problem or situation. However, the workshop program developed into a viable program on its own, and few projects were a result of workshop attendance. Workshop topics were initially identified through a survey of nonprofit and business individuals and, subsequently, through feedback from workshops participants and trends identified in the community. The most popular were grant writing, financial planning for nonfinancial managers, strategic planning, and interpersonal communication skills.

Many workshops were co-sponsored with other institutions and organizations in order to promote the university as a willing partner with others, utilize existing community resources and established expertise, and build partnerships. Registrations fees were kept low in order to encourage attendance and make it affordable to many: the average was $15 and included meals and materials.

The faculty-on-site program was designed to address projects that required more time with an organization, typically ten hours per week over a number of months. Faculty teaching time for one class was bought out, enabling a faculty member to work extended hours with a business or organization. An example of a faculty-on-site project involved working with a geographic information system design and marketing program.

CSR was extended through February 1996, six months longer than originally funded. The extension was possible through the transfer of unexpended grant funds from the city and the second subgrant, an economic development agency responsible for marketing of CSR, and tight fiscal management of project funds. By the time CSR ended, fifty organizations had received technical assistance through projects, three faculty-on-site projects were completed, and 40 workshops (with a total attendance of 600) had been held. An evaluation of the program indicated that numerous goals had been met:

- 65% of workshop attendees and the same percentage of assistance recipients had never had contact with the university prior to CSR; 99% indicated they would use the university again for assistance;
- Thirty-one University of Michigan-Flint faculty and nine University of Michigan Ann Arbor faculty were involved in projects and workshops and expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the experience;
- Assistance recipients reported positive outcomes in terms of revenue enhancement, implementation of strategic plans, and growth potential for their business. These recipients responded one year later in a follow-up evaluation that the positive impact of the assistance was still being felt.

Workshop attendees indicated utilization of information: recounting success stories such as grants received based on increased grant-writing skills through workshops.

The Transition from CSR

By May of 1995, it was clear that the CSR project had entered into activities that the community felt were needed: technical assistance requests from businesses were increasing and workshops were in demand. Six months after beginning CSR, we had placed a moratorium on providing assistance to nonprofits due to the overwhelming number of requests and the need to balance expenditure of funds between nonprofits and for-profits. It was not until the last few months of CSR, when additional funds from the city were received, that technical assistance was again provided to nonprofits.

Clearly, the programs could not be fully supported with university funds—the amounts required for underwriting assistance were too great. Also of primary importance was that assistance be accessible by small businesses and the many nonprofit organizations in the Flint region. With the support of the community in evidence and an increasing number of faculty involved, the hunt was on for funding to continue the various programs.

In October 1995, the University of Michigan-Flint was awarded a five-year Title XI Urban Community Service grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant enabled the business assistance portion of CSR to continue using grant funds to provide technical assistance primarily to small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Flint Area Enterprise Community. In February 1996, we were awarded a grant from the campus chancellor for the implementation of a service learning program, which enabled us to continue the model of assistance through academically based community projects with students. Additionally, the chancellor made a commitment to fund the outreach director's salary and cover some office expenses.

In October 1996, HUD awarded us a Community Outreach Partnership Center grant, which enables us to develop partnerships with a specific neighborhood group and the K-12 schools within its boundaries. In July 1997, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation awarded the office a grant to support six initiatives, including technical assistance for nonprofits, implementation of an incubator for emerging community-based organizations, and enhanced service learning activities. Also included is a program that enables us to invite noted individuals familiar with university/community partnerships to campus to share their knowledge, to familiarize our campus and community with successful endeavors around the county, and to assist us in exploring the intricacies of partnerships.

The combined grants and funding streams have enabled our staff to grow from four to eleven, we have opened offices in two additional community locations and one location on campus, and we were designated the Center for University Outreach for the University of Michigan-Flint in March 1997. Most importantly, the level of outreach with the community has increased significantly in scope of services and interaction between university and community.

Lessons in Process

From its establishment as CSR, the role of the outreach office has been one of broker and boundary spanner: identifying how best to utilize the resources of the university to add value to the community in support of the mission of teaching, research, and service. Concurrently, we have addressed how to bring the resources of the community to the university to add value to the institution. Underlying all of this is the ongoing struggle between doing good (pragmatic approach) and adding knowledge (scholarly approach).

This struggle is well described by Michigan State University's Committee on Evaluating Quality Outreach in "Points of Distinction: A Guidebook for Planning and Evaluating Quality Outreach." (1996) which contains definitions of outreach based on scholarship, guidelines and a matrix for evaluating outreach for promotion and tenure decisions, and processes to consider for moving an institution, its departments, and its individuals toward valuing and rewarding outreach.

Our lessons for positioning outreach are more simple and grounded in basic survival techniques. The orientation we have taken to positioning outreach is informed by experience and by keeping in mind the need to enable others to meet their goals through outreach. The value-added approach to positioning and institutionalizing outreach and developing a power base is based on the following seven lessons.

Lesson 1: Non-substitutability. Taken from the readings of Simon's *Administrative Behavior* (1957), non-substitutability simply means creating a situation in which no one else is able to provide the same service, knowledge, or resources as you. With no substitute available, the unit is the logical and only choice for the work.

In the case of our university, prior to CSR there was no central access point for the community to contact the university for assistance, so that contacts were made on the basis of knowing someone, calling the general information number, or calling the chancellor's office. CSR put a face on the university for the community and slowly began emerging as an access point for the university to enter the community. Through the development of partnerships and relationships in the community, the center is being given responsibility for formalizing and managing partnerships between the university and the K-12 systems and other organizations. When special projects involving the community are identified, the center is frequently at the table representing the university, because there is no viable substitute within the university with the same information, resources, and connections.

Lesson 2: Creating and meeting expectations. Primary operating principles of CSR were to respond quickly to requests for assistance, to break the perception of university malaise and indifference, and to promote faculty expertise in the community. Businesses and non-profits came to expect CSR, and subsequently the center, to provide a whole range of services and information. The same level of service and subsequent expectation of response is being developed with our internal clients.

Through our service learning program, faculty receive tremendous staff support in integrating academically-based service projects into their courses: the program manager assists with writing course objectives, identifies potential project sites, manages the logistics for the faculty and students, assists with the evaluation of projects, and conducts reflection sessions. This level of service makes the service learning experience more accessible to faculty, enabling them to enhance their teaching and providing students with valuable experience and learning.

In creating expectations of services or level of involvement, it is important to think in the long term: will it be possible to maintain the same level of service as the program grows? What are the staffing and funding requirements? Is it possible to maintain the expectations but redefine the activities? As an example, service learning may still provide assistance with writing course objectives and conducting reflection sessions for faculty new to the program, but, over time, experienced faculty will be able to do this themselves and provide instruction to others.

Lesson 3: Reducing threat and co-opting through partnership. With the initiation of CSR, it was clear in some cases we were in direct competition with businesses providing consulting services. In the first month we invited consulting firms and consultants to a meeting to explain the program and to indicate how we would not bid on any project, as well as to explain how we wished to utilize their expertise as workshop presenters and how we might be able to hire them to work on projects when university personnel were not available. Through addressing the potential threat and forming partnerships, we were able to maintain conciliatory and supportive relationships. We continue to maintain a no-bid policy today.

The intentional partnering with existing organizations and university units on workshops and assistance projects has resulted in referrals from those organizations as well as presenting other opportunities for programs. We began to be approached to co-sponsor activities, to provide information, and to be brought to the table for critical discussions about economic and community development activities. The university has gained a reputation as a contributor and partner in the community as well as the university. The power base of resources enables the center to promote and support partnerships.

Lesson 4: Leverage resources. Resources are the currency of outreach; they are the barter that enables us to stretch our limited funds. Our grant funds and operating monies have been used for leveraging relationships with community organizations and units within the university. Co-sponsorships of programs, partnerships, and collaborations have been established around issues of mutual concern (e.g., healthy children, recruitment of students, K-12 education).

An important development in our thinking has been to broadly define the resources of the university so as to include expertise of faculty, staff, students, and alumni, physical facilities, money, center staff, location, networks, and anything else that can be brought to the table. We have sought partnerships with the university director of research to support research requests he is not able to fund. We are working with the provost's office to support a series of programs to involve faculty in outreach development workshops.

In addition to our assistance programs with the community, we will reserve rooms on campus for meetings, bring together community organizations to explore partnerships, provide funding for programs, and make contacts and referrals to whomever needs to be involved or interested in an activity.

We leverage our resources and those of the university and community to enable others to gain more and develop their own resources. Our activities with an organization can be documented for their grant proposals, and support from external organizations can be in-kind contributions to our programs. Mutual benefit and leveraging create a synergistic partnership.

Within the university small contributions can be leveraged to a larger advantage. For example, a faculty member is interested in conducting an applied research project with the county health department, but needs some incentives for survey participants. The center is able to work with the university's recreation center to provide free passes to the recreation center for all those who complete and return a survey. Our resource is a relationship with the recreation center that enables us to add value to the project and our relationship with the faculty member.

Lesson 5: Presenting a value-added approach. As described in the first section of this article, a critical element in positioning university outreach for continued support and eventual institutionalization is identifying value-added elements for each constituent group. As an example, the service learning program staff go beyond expectations in providing support to faculty interested in incorporating academically based service projects in their courses. Not only do faculty receive assistance with incorporating service learning into courses, but they can add academic value to their course at less personal cost. Their students benefit from the application of knowledge to a situation in the community, faculty develop new contacts for potential research, and the community benefits through the interaction.

We design our programs to add capacity to university units, too. The America Reads program, in which additional work-study money is used to support university students providing literacy tutoring in K-12 schools, might have been passed by due to low staffing in the financial aid office. However, the service learning program volunteered to manage the program and has developed a management process and identified funding for staff support that can now be turned over to the financial aid office. Other examples include bringing together university units with businesses that have technical resources of value to the unit. Matching and brokering relationships have added value to the participants.

Lesson 6: Always say "yes" until you can afford to say "no." In working with the university and community, we have maintained an attitude that just about anything is possible, or, if we are not able to provide what is requested, we will find those who can. Thus, when an organization requests assistance with some issue, we will not say "no," but will identify some other source of support. The same is true with units and individuals of the university; we continue to respond as positively as possible to all requests.

As we have established credibility and a reputation for being responsive, we have been able to review requests more rationally and to indicate what is within our abilities and interests. We continue to locate alternative sources of assistance when we are unable to help, but are more clear in defining our role and mission in relation to the community and university. Selectively saying no is a matter of having an alternative source for the person or organization making a request.

Lesson 7: A Very Supportive Administration. A key element in our story has been the support of the chancellor and provost. In both cases, the individuals in these positions have had personal and institutional views that outreach to the community is critical for the university. They have demonstrated public support through funding, personal involvement with activities, speeches and formal documents to the university and community, and in the reporting relationship of the center director to the chancellor.

In working with the administration, the center has used all of these lessons to meet the needs of administrators concerned with recruiting and retaining students, quality of education, limited resources, and the desire to position the university as having a role in economic and community development. In turn, administrators are able to use the center and its activities as evidence of one of the university's contributions to the community.

Summary. The seven lessons from our experience expand upon the earlier strategic activity of developing power through providing value to key constituents. By leveraging resources to support faculty research, the center is able to position university outreach to address one of the pressure points confronting faculty. Administrators are likely to be more supportive of university outreach when it enables them to respond to questions about what the university has done for the state lately.

Conclusion

Centers and units of university outreach can strategically position their work and outcomes to lead to support and continuance within a university setting. Through managed and creative use of resources, the center can make valuable contributions to the institution and community. The value of those contributions is in the eye of the recipients, which requires the center staff to assume the perspective of the constituent when consciously designing the work to be done. Outreach offices can thus consciously develop power through the strategic use of resources to the benefit of the university and community.

Suggested Readings

Committee on Evaluating Quality Outreach, *Points of Distinction: A Guidebook for Planning & Evaluating Quality Outreach* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, 1996).

Hickson, D. J., C. R. Hinings, C. A. Lee, R. E. Schneck, and J. M. Pennings. "A Strategic Contingencies Theory of Interorganizational Power," *Administrative Science Quarterly 16*(1971): 216-219.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey, *Power in Organizations* (Marshfield, MA: Pitman, 1981).

Ramaley, Judith A., and Gary Withers, "Restructuring and Reform in Higher Education Fundraising and the Urban Advantage," *Metropolitan Universities 8*(Fall, 1997): 43-56.

Simon, Herbert A., *Administrative Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1957).