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Connecting university teaching, research, and expertise to communities in Massachusetts and beyond

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Connecting university teaching, research, and expertise to communities in Massachusetts and beyond

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Summary
The Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) was created in 2011 to promote collaborative campus-community partnerships that advance UMass Boston’s mission as a student-centered research university while addressing critical challenges in society. This effort is aligned with the vision of the university to advance engaged teaching, research, and service through mutually beneficial and equitable campus-community collaborations.

Goals and Objectives
• Identify and document existing university-community partnerships connected to UMass Boston teaching and learning, research, and service.
• Increase internal and public awareness of identified partnerships.
• Strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones through collaboration and assessment.

Approaches and Methods
• Document university-community partnerships through survey tools, website monitoring, interviews, etc.
• Meet internal and external requests for partnerships by facilitating planning meetings and connecting relevant faculty, staff, and organizations.
• Monitor community priorities and opportunities for collaboration.
• Identify and pursue funding/recognition opportunities to help the university increase community-engaged activities and better “tell its story.”

Results
• 300+ university-community initiatives documented.
• 1100+ unique community partners identified.
• Helped secure $236,000 grant for CESI initiative.
• $2,000,000+ in pending proposals for community-engaged research in past 2 months.
• Supported faculty, student, and university recognition through three national award programs.

A Collaboration Illustrated
LIFT Boston is serving as an adviser for UMass Boston’s Office of Urban and Off-Campus Support Services (U-ACCESS), which was created to provide support to students affected by chronic or persistent poverty, homelessness, financial emergencies, and other unanticipated events. UMass Boston also serves on the board of LIFT Boston. This represents mutual reciprocity in which each stakeholder is benefiting from each other’s expertise.

Public Policy PhD students in the McCormack Graduate School are helping LIFT Boston learn through a community-based research project how its innovative service model helps low-income clients achieve individual and family well-being.

Next Steps
• Develop an inventory of university resources, such as reports, expertise, and research that can support and/or strengthen university partnership activities.
• Work with stakeholders to conduct impact assessments of partnership activities (direct, indirect, immediate, and long-term impact on community and university).
• Conduct a social network analysis to identify community stakeholders, resources, and opportunities for additional collaboration.
• Use assessments and network analysis to guide new initiatives, strengthen existing ones, increase collaboration and enhance efficacy of community-engaged activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example Partnership Matrix</th>
<th>Networking</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
<th>Cooperation</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal, exchanging information for mutual benefit; minimal time and trust.</td>
<td>Exchanging information for mutual benefit, altering activities to achieve common purpose; improved access to services and resources.</td>
<td>Altering activities, sharing resources to achieve common purpose; substantial time/trust; some sharing of risks, responsibilities, rewards.</td>
<td>Most formal, longer-term; high levels of time and trust; altering activities, sharing resources, enhancing capacity of each other; full sharing of risks, responsibilities, and rewards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These partnerships are from the Office of Community Partnerships; from community collaboration; UMass, Boston, and Service-Learning. Services include: Tufts University, Boston College, Harvard University, and Northeastern University.*