

## From the Desk of the Chancellor – October 9

The strategic planning probe of the week is to explore these questions:

- What are the barriers to community partnerships we should seek to overcome?
- What are some new opportunities we should pursue?
- Are there ways to strengthen existing partnerships and make them more effective?
- Are we organized in the best way to attract federal investment for our community partnerships in a heavily outcomes-based funding environment?

I pose these questions because how well we fulfill our vision for the future may well depend on increasing the impact of our community engagement. "In the twenty-first century, it seems to us that research universities are perhaps the most influential institutions in advanced societies," write Ira Harkavy and Rita Hodges of the Progressive Policy Institute in a new publication. Building on their argument that research universities are "anchor institutions" (because they tend to concentrate human and economic capital in their region), they suggest that civic partnerships between government and higher education are the best way to address such urgent community problems as poverty, inadequate healthcare, and low-performing public schools.

Thus, the federal government would be wise to deploy modest financial incentives to stimulate civic partnerships that enable universities to have a beneficial impact on their communities. The investment would yield both local and worldwide benefits as universities working to solve universal problems generate knowledge and best practices that are not only locally but also nationally and globally applicable.

In their report, *Democratic Devolution: How America's Colleges and Universities Can Strengthen Their Communities*, Harkavy and Hodges cite IUPUI's partnership with the George Washington Community High School as an example of a civic partnership to support K-12. IUPUI also has the Crispus Attucks Medical Magnet School and the new IU McKinney School of Law partnership with the Shortridge Magnet High School for Law and Public Policy. Significant U.S. Department of Education grants have gone to collaborations between our School of Education and Indianapolis Public Schools on English as a Second Language training (recently expanded to Pike Township Schools) and to the Community Learning Network's project to establish full-service community schools in three elementary schools in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhoods of the Near Eastside.

Harkavy and Hodges argue that for colleges and universities to realize their full potential and act effectively, they "need to overcome the fragmentation of disciplines, overspecialization, and division between and among the arts and sciences and professions that are particularly characteristic of major research universities."

As noted, IUPUI has organized itself fairly effectively to take advantage of federal investments in civic partnerships. It is part of our history and must be part of our future. But, can we do better?

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