

*Jill F. Russell and
Richard B. Flynn*

The University of Nebraska at Omaha has a number of active partnerships with the community. Two of the more visible are the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium and the College of Information Science and Technology. The Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium brings together public school personnel with university faculty to address issues of common concern. The College of Information Science and Technology was created and designed to operate in close cooperation with business and industry. Both represent new approaches to expanding communications and collaboration with multiple sectors in the region.

Adventures in Cross-sector Collaboration

As an institution, the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) has increasingly acknowledged both the necessity and benefits of working with the community. A phrase expressed frequently by the immediate past chancellor was, “UNO—a part of, not apart from, the community.” Two major examples of the university’s commitment to cross-sector collaboration are described in this article: (1) the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC); and (2) a newly created College of Information Science and Technology.

Background and Context

UNO is a regional comprehensive institution offering extensive baccalaureate and master's level programs and limited doctoral programs. It is the metropolitan campus of the University of Nebraska system, serving both traditional and older students who often have significant work and family obligations. Enrollment is approximately 15,000 students. The institution has just acquired a new chancellor, after 20 years under the former chancellor. The dean of education, who provided the lead-

ership for both projects described here, has been at UNO for 28 years, serving as dean for the past twelve years. The Executive Director of MOEC has been involved with the College of Education and with MOEC for ten years.

The Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC)

MOEC began as the idea of a new dean who recognized that the reform literature called for greater connectivity between colleges of education and pre-K through 12th grade schools. The idea developed into conversations between the dean and local superintendents, conversations that expanded and became more structured. A few consultants with experience in collaboration were tapped, and the literature reviewed. After eighteen months of deliberations with selected area school superintendents, a formal memorandum of understanding was signed. MOEC was initiated in August 1988 as a collaborative arrangement among five local school districts and the college. A few years later two additional districts joined, with the result that all the urban/suburban contiguous districts are members, and the geographic scope now touches three counties in two states. About 90,000 youth are encompassed in the consortium, as well as 5,000 public school educators, 65 faculty in the college, and 2,500 undergraduate and graduate students preparing for initial or advanced careers in education. In addition, faculty from other colleges are involved as the need arises.

The consortium is housed administratively within the university, and all members, including the college, pay equal dues. Although the budget itself is relatively small (\$56,000/year), the consortium has provided significant leverage for grants and self-sustaining projects. Over \$2 million dollars in grants have been received by MOEC since its inception nine years ago. Staffing includes a part-time executive director (who is also a faculty member in educational administration and supervision), a part-time coordinator, a part-time secretary, and a full-time project coordinator for two self-funded projects. Decision-making takes place at several levels. The Executive Steering Committee, comprised of the superintendents and the dean, oversees the general operations. There are twelve task forces and each operates with considerable leeway as to direction and initiatives.

Implementation issues—and their resolution—that were viewed as critical for consensus at the time the consortium was being established included:

- What should the amount of the dues and the structure be? Everyone pays the same, \$7,000 each. In addition, the college provides considerable in-kind services;

- Who should be allowed to join? It was determined that the focus was urban/suburban. Only contiguous school districts in the metro area were invited to join, and UNO was the only postsecondary institution involved;
- Where would the administrative home be located? Would we seek 501(c)(3) status, be housed at one of the school districts, or at the university? The university was selected;
- How would we structure ourselves for decision-making? It was determined that the Executive Steering Committee members would oversee operations, would meet approximately monthly, would not send designees, and would all be considered equal;
- How would we take action? Task forces were chosen as the first mode of operation;
- How would information be shared with those not directly involved? Minutes of all meetings are shared with the Executive Steering Committee members, who may then share them with key staff members. Chairs of departments in the college are also provided minutes. In more recent years, a MOEC newsletter has been established;
- How would the consortium be staffed? The first executive director was a newly-retired superintendent. There was also a coordinator (who later became the current executive director) with a part-time secretary;
- Would the consortium focus on programs or politics? The decision was made to concentrate on programs. Although political leverage or lobbying groups can be effective, it was thought that a better emphasis for this collaborative venture would be programmatic.

Evolutionary Nature

The form and process of MOEC have evolved over the years. The intent was to capitalize on the smallness and flexibility of the organization to permit variance in mode of operations. Originally MOEC started out with two task forces, whose focus had been determined by a needs assessment of all member institutions to identify areas of common concern and mutual interest, and the first two addressed staff development and middle level education. Task forces consisted of individuals from each member organization named by the superintendent and dean. As time went on, additional task forces were established, and there are presently twelve active task forces.

An annual cycle has emerged that includes summer planning with the chair of each task force for the coming year, fall and spring implementation (meetings, projects, activities), and a “showcase” event in the spring during which accomplishments of the year and plans for the future are shared with the Executive Steering Committee and all other task force members. The spring event has taken on the aspects of a competition, with each group vying for the most high-tech, impressive presentation they can muster. The groups’ activities during the year range from sharing and networking to hosting conferences, seeking grants, compiling research, and producing reports, research syntheses, or project descriptions. The planning cycle continues with a summer retreat for the Executive Steering Committee during which issues of general direction are discussed, including a past year evaluation and plans for the future.

During the year, the groups also commission position papers, carry out funded projects, implement public relations campaigns, share communications with power brokers and the media, and offer recommendations for improvement of the college’s programs.

Two self-funded projects have also evolved through MOEC activities: the Mentor Project and the CADRE Project. The Mentor Project started with a three-year federal grant to provide training to experienced teachers to serve as mentors to first-year teachers. When the grant funds ran out, the Staff Development Task Force and the Executive Steering Committee, enthusiastic about continuing the effort, created a budget and a means to continue the project on a self-funded basis. The CADRE Project (Career Advancement and Development for Recruits and Experienced Teachers) was born from the Mentor Project. It allows experienced teachers in the public schools to leave the classroom for one to three years, replaced by newly certificated teachers who become employees of the university and work on their master’s degrees. The experienced teachers serve as mentors to the new teachers about 25 percent of their time, carry out district responsibilities 50 percent of their time, and undertake university responsibilities for the remaining 25 percent. The new teachers take classes together as a cohort group, assume complete responsibility for the classroom, are first in line for a regular position the next year (by which time they have earned a master’s degree), and are provided special support through the program. The project is financed so that no extra monies are needed and three professionals are employed for the price of two. The school district gains by having extra human resources, the experienced teacher benefits by the renewal experience, the new teacher earns a master’s degree and a first chance for an ongoing teaching position, and the university gains

from extra human resources—all at no extra cost. The CADRE project has been highly successful and an Administrative Intern Program based on the same model is on the drawing board.

Another no-cost venture that grew out of MOEC is the Educational Administration Summer Leadership Symposium, a workshop offered each summer that travels around the metro area. A faculty member coordinates the logistics, but the content is delivered primarily by MOEC superintendents and their key staff members. The workshops focus on critical issues facing each school district and special programs that have been developed to improve teaching and learning in the schools. The workshop is well received and especially appreciated by aspiring administrators who have the chance to interact personally with district leadership teams.

MOEC started out small, seeking to establish a good track record, and it did not receive much attention or fanfare in the early years. As time went on, however, a strong cross-sector collaboration developed through bringing the superintendents and dean together on a regular basis, and it became apparent to other groups that MOEC was able to address issues of interest and importance to the entire community. For example, a representative of the chamber of commerce asks to be on the agenda from time to time. The state education commissioner seeks an invitation several times a year. And a medical doctor who wishes to bring school nurses and medical professionals from across the metro area together to discuss establishing a common asthma management protocol across districts recently sought approval to proceed through MOEC.

MOEC staff and representatives are now invited to be active players in other community-wide initiatives and cross-sector collaborative ventures that extend beyond secondary and postsecondary education: human services, education, business/industry, government agencies, and the judicial system. A primary example is the “Safe Futures” organization, which brings together existing collaboratives to address the issues of youth violence and a safe community. The university provides leadership for Safe Futures primarily through the College of Public Affairs and Community Service, which supports the group financially, but MOEC was asked to participate and represent public education because it had recently created a youth violence task force to address a growing problem. The MOEC executive director now serves on the board of the Safe Futures group with others whose primary concerns range all the way from parent education to tracking gang members—and everything in between. This activity demonstrates how the university can provide a useful, neutral role for a potentially turf-conscious group.

MOEC is also represented in the "Human Services Roundtable" work sponsored by the local United Way, an effort to facilitate comprehensive human services planning and eventually to encourage a decategorized funding model that provides more holistic support for client needs. Schools are often not closely involved with human services planning even though they are the organizations that have the most regular contact with individuals in need of assistance. A MOEC staff member serves on the overarching committee for the Human Services Roundtable and chairs the education subcommittee, and his/her involvement assures that the perspective of education is considered for all school districts. Information about the progress of the Round Table, which may radically change human services funding and delivery in the greater Omaha area, is shared regularly with the superintendents and dean.

The benefits accrued by the university have grown as MOEC has expanded. The regular opportunities for communication have fostered research, service, grants, internships, and team teaching. For example, collaborative technology training programs have been funded, and research on special education conducted. Academic programs have been strengthened by input from and involvement with practitioners, and the departments of teacher education and educational administration have been particularly enhanced by MOEC. Assessment methods have expanded to include more performance-based opportunities for the college's students. Sharing and synthesizing best-practices research is helpful to all who are involved, whether in middle level education, early childhood programs, or effective elementary practices. More indirectly, the image of the college and the university has been enhanced in the professional education community.

As time has passed, MOEC has had to deal increasingly with the politicization of education and the fact that its members are facing unprecedented funding cuts. Because of retirement, only one of the original superintendents remains.

Smaller neighboring districts on the outskirts of the metropolitan area are requesting membership, and there is concern about their size and whether their agenda is the same as those of more urbanized districts. MOEC is potentially vulnerable. If a key district were to decide to withdraw its membership, if funding cuts for the districts were so severe that they could not afford membership dues, if college administrations were to change and redirect resources, any and all of these could jeopardize MOEC's existence. However, there is now a good track record, a positive trusting relationship, and an improved sense of the university's involvement in the community. Hopefully these benefits, coupled with ongoing opportunities, can overcome any problems the future might bring.

The College of Information Science and Technology

The story of the College of Information Science and Technology (IS&T) started with conflict, an almost archetypal conflict between an older land grant institution and its newer sister campus. In this situation the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is the long-established, land grant institution, while the University of Nebraska at Omaha, founded in 1908 as a municipal university, joined the University of Nebraska system in 1968, and is located in the state's largest urban area where most businesses are located. Select programs originating from the Lincoln engineering college had long been delivered to the Omaha campus, but the offerings were limited. Therefore, Omaha area business and community leaders teamed with several local engineering professionals to launch a campaign for a second engineering college in Omaha. The argument was economic development. The president of the University of Nebraska system and the Board of Regents for the system commissioned a study and examined data carefully, and concluded that what was really needed was an information technology preparation program, rather than an engineering college, in Omaha.

The chancellor in Omaha commissioned a group of business leaders and academics, chaired by a prominent business leader, to look at the needs and suggest direction. Within two months a report was issued calling for an innovative program that would:

- provide diverse, “just-in-time” educational and training opportunities and be responsive and relevant to the continually changing market demands of business and industry;
- be recognized throughout commerce and academic circles for its high quality;
- offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, research and consulting services, certificates in special programs, seminars, and continuing education;
- produce job-ready students (employees) with applicable skill sets;
- be a model partnership between the university and business and industry for (1) creating and transferring knowledge; (2) developing better and new applications through research; and (3) commingling investments to gain a higher collective return.

The goal was to design a program that was clearly interactive with the information technology employers and practitioners in the region and state and in alignment with trends and developments in technology.

The co-author of this article was asked to serve as Special Assistant to the Chancellor and Director of IS&T to provide leadership in developing the necessary programmatic plans and obtaining appropriate approvals. He interviewed business leaders, employers and faculty. The chief executive officers and chief information officers of many companies shared their hopes and dreams in relation to the future of their companies and IS&T, and described how they were embracing and incorporating technological change in many ways not even imagined a few years ago. Likewise, faculty were excited about the possibilities of this new type of academic program.

The IS&T program rationale that emerged was based on the premise that rapid changes within information technology were changing the ways that companies do business, necessitating a new paradigm in academic preparation programs for technology-related jobs. The concept was shared through multiple presentations to audiences both within and external to the university, making the following points:

- UNO is a metropolitan university serving the Omaha technology hub;
- UNO has a responsibility to Omaha area business/industry to provide employees skilled in IS&T;
- UNO has an opportunity to provide its students with an IS&T education that leads to high demand jobs;
- UNO has an opportunity to contribute to the economic growth of Nebraska.

As the program (budget, staffing, operational principles, collaboration, and curriculum) was being planned, two major tasks were given to the director of IS&T. First, the director was asked to proceed immediately with planning for a full-blown College of Information Science and Technology, including gaining support and approval for the proposed college from all the necessary campus, community, system, and state entities. In addition, it seemed timely to request a new facility to house the proposed college and the Omaha-based engineering programs. Thus, the director and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UN-L) engineering dean were asked to take the initiative in preparing a program statement for such a building. Again, time was of the essence and these two tasks were afforded top priority.

The process of designing the college continued, including the use of national experts to advise on structure and direction. These consultants participated in multiple meetings with both university personnel and business representatives, were impressed by the promise of business and community support, and concluded that the university was pursuing the correct course of action.

Other design steps included examination of survey data from regional employers of information technology personnel, a review of literature describing ongoing IS&T-related programs, contacts with and visits to programs around the country, and use of an Academic Planning Task Force. The task force included faculty from the existing units that were assumed to be merging into the new program, as well as those from other disciplines.

Conversations with business/industry and the local Chamber of Commerce continued throughout the development process. The number of high tech-oriented companies in the Omaha area is large and growing, there is extensive technology change occurring within established professions and industry, and companies are making dramatic changes in the way they operate. Some companies expressed a desire to maintain their technological edge; others needed to create a new edge. They all needed trained personnel.

The Focus of the New IS&T Lens

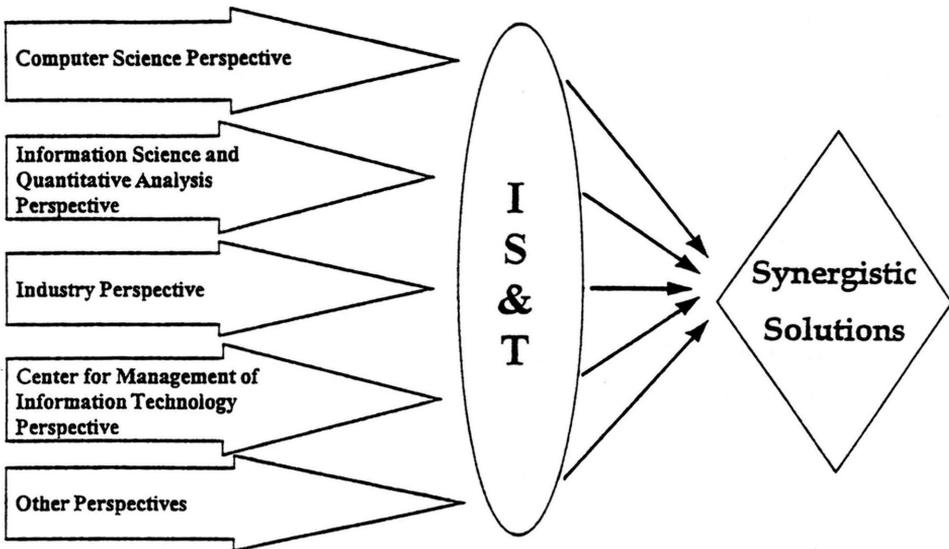


Figure 1.

A concept that crystallized during the planning is depicted in Figure 1, which conveys the idea that the IS&T perspective brings together more narrow views of traditional computer science, information systems, and information technology academic units with the industry perspective, so that a wider, more interdisciplinary view emerges. The result is that synergistic, creative solutions can be generated and applied

to problems; because of the cross-discipline synergism and the new perspective offered, higher level questions can be posed, leading to more challenging insights and possibilities.

It was proposed that the new college be created by bringing together three existing units: (1) computer science from the College of Arts and Science; (2) elements of information systems and quantitative analysis from the College of Business Administration; and (3) the Center for Management of Information Technology, an interdisciplinary research and outreach unit reporting directly to the vice chancellor for academic affairs. The next step would be to establish two new areas: (1) information technology (undergraduate and graduate degree programs); and (2) telecommunications (a graduate degree program). Bringing these IS&T-related units together in a single college should provide focus, organize a critical mass of intellectual capital, and enable the university to improve its responsiveness to IS&T-related needs in the region and state.

Success was to be measured in part by the bridges built between IS&T and other academic units, and between IS&T and the business community. The number of bridges and the extent of traffic (in both directions) were both seen as highly important. Success would also be measured by the quality of the graduates, including the fit with employers' needs and readiness to deal with future technology issues. The hoped-for outcomes included:

- increased numbers of well-prepared graduates ready for entry level and advanced level positions;
- the capacity for immediate response to changes in technology, business/industry, and economic conditions;
- the development of effective working relationships with business/industry partners;
- instructional delivery based on effective practices;
- contributions to the knowledge base;
- solutions to problems in business/industry;
- economic growth in the region and state.

To achieve these outcomes, a symbiotic relationship with business/industry was assumed to be a prerequisite. As plans developed, the following objectives assumed a pivotal role:

- The college will offer undergraduate and graduate degrees and continuing education programs in the fields of information science and technology. The program will encompass the following

functions of information processing and management: information generation, information transmission, information storage and retrieval, information presentation, information analysis, and information use;

- The college will respond to competency areas identified by business. These areas will be modified as technology and business needs change, but will include topics such as virtual reality, client/server management, and systems integration;
- The college will be: (a) interactive with business/industry; (b) responsive to business/industry; (c) relevant in producing marketable graduates; (d) dynamic, with quick response to new technology trends; (e) recognized for its high quality programs.
- The college will encompass the traditional disciplines of computer science, information systems and quantitative analysis, and the newly evolving area of information technology; it will also include elements of telecommunications. It will draw from the fields of human factors engineering, industrial psychology, communications, and sensory physiology;
- The college will include the Center for the Management of Information Technology, whose primary function is to serve as a liaison to the community, to facilitate applied research, to ensure relevant curricula, and to encourage dialogue and interaction between the college and employers;
- The college will emphasize recruitment, retention, and graduation of students from the greater Omaha metropolitan area, the state of Nebraska, and across the United States;
- The college will develop a Center for Telecommunications that will promote state-of-the-art course work and research, as well as provide outreach services and establish partnerships with the business community;
- The faculty in the college will include several models of appointments. There will be traditional tenure-track, full-time lines. There will be shared appointments with business/industry. There will be joint appointments with other colleges. Incentives, rewards, and reappointments will be based on a model that aligns with, and supports, the college's emphasis on working collaboratively with business/industry;
- The college will be structured and organized with the intent of supporting and facilitating change and responsiveness.

An IS&T Inputs, Processes, and Outputs model was developed to help communicate the intent of ongoing interaction and responsiveness with employers and readiness to change as technology changed. This model is graphically displayed in Figure 2.

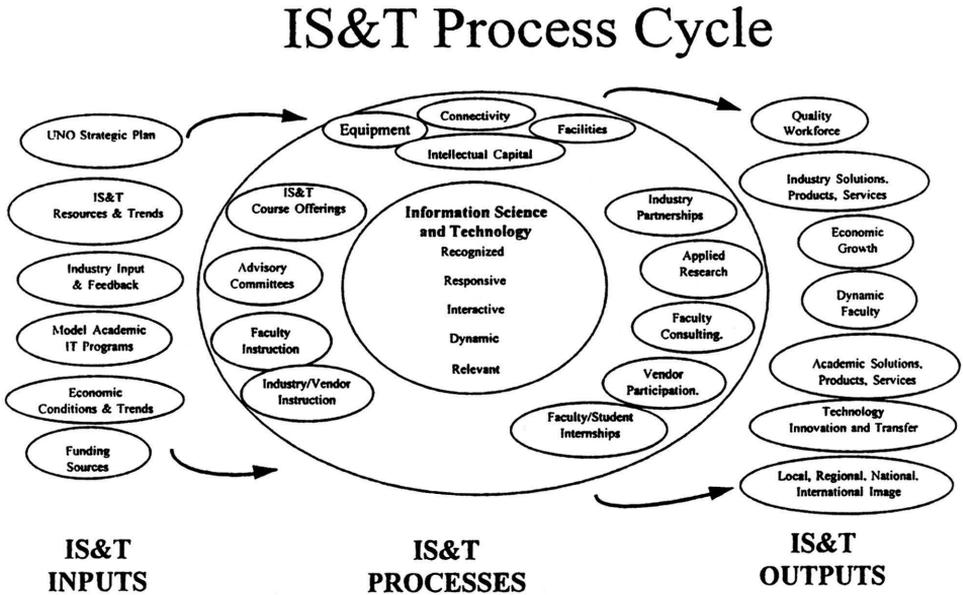


Figure 2.

It includes the following *inputs* to the IS&T process: the institutional strategic plan, trends in IS&T, industry input, model academic programs, funding opportunities, and economic conditions. *Processes* specified within the model include: relevant course offerings, active advisory committees, industry partnerships, internships, consultancies, applied research, shared facilities and resources, increased intellectual capital, and connectivity with other parts of the university and community. The model suggests the following *outputs*: well-prepared graduates, solutions for industry, economic growth, technology innovation and transfer, a dynamic faculty, and a high quality image.

Throughout the design process there was a clear sense of urgency, yet at the same time a protocol to be followed. All the while, the pressure from the business community and media was unrelenting. They wanted to know why the college couldn't be established and operational even more quickly, not realizing that typically new program development and approval takes three to five years. The IS&T College was designed and went through the entire approval process in ten months.

The success of the accelerated time line for approving the College of IS&T can be attributed to:

- the commitment of the university's administration and faculty to the goals;
- the careful attention to the expressed needs of the business community, as well as the provision of frequent updates;
- the business community's insistence on the college's quick development;
- the acknowledgment by various advisory boards that higher education's ability to be responsive was on the line in the state.

In order to obtain the necessary funds for the new college, fundraising with private donors and discussions with the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, the Postsecondary Coordinating Commission, and the legislature began early. Capitalizing on the energy associated with the cross-sector design and development process was key to the strategy.

The initial planning and program statement for the proposed facility resulted in a 37.5 million dollar building project. Fourteen million dollars was pledged by the community and the remainder requested from the state legislature. The community's financial commitment to the college continues to increase, with tens of millions of dollars pledged thus far to support scholarships, internships, endowed professorships, research, and other operational costs.

As planning for the new facility progressed, major changes occurred once more. One of the area's largest employers, First Data Resources (FDR), proposed acquiring 140 acres of land close to the campus that had become available due to the recent demise of horse racing in the city. FDR's proposals to the county (the owners of the property) included giving the university 70 of the acquired acres with the understanding that the new information science, technology, and engineering (IST&E) building would be constructed there. UNO could then use the remainder of the 70 acres as future needs dictated. The proposal was accepted, and the site of the IST&E building was shifted from the campus to the newly acquired tract of land located a few blocks away. The new tract of land significantly increased the size of the UNO campus, which until this point had been land-locked on an 88-acre site. It also added the increased complexity that accompanies a geographically split campus.

After a whirlwind design process, the search for a permanent dean began; six members of the search committee were from business and industry. A new dean and associate dean were hired; the associate dean came from business. Existing courses were transformed, new courses were created, and the college began operations. Employment of faculty in the new areas to be created was planned to span a multi-year period. A number of development issues continued into the first year of operations.

Current Status of IS&T

The purpose of this section has been to describe the development of the new College of Information Science and Technology as an example of cross-sector collaboration, but it is important to acknowledge an effort that occurred shortly after planning for the new college commenced. While the director of IS&T was developing the new college, planning also took place for a cooperative venture between the UNO and UN-L campuses that would lead to joint research and increased responsiveness to both IS&T and the engineering needs of the business community: a proposed Institute of Information Science, Technology, and Engineering. Shortly after the new college was approved for the UNO campus, the institute became a reality, with representation from the two university campuses and the Omaha business community. In many ways, the institute's advisory board will oversee development and growth of information science, technology, and engineering efforts in the metropolitan area.

At the time of this writing the jury is still out. The new college is completing its first year of operation. The process is ongoing, and curriculum development is still under way. Means of working with business and industry are still being formulated, and the intermingling of cultures and learning continues. But the stage has been set for a continual communication between sectors in the community and the university about readiness to address the growing and rapidly changing field of information technology.

Lessons Learned

There have been lessons learned through these two experiences about what is effective in cross-sector collaboration, and what is less than effective. Following are some of the key lessons.

Problems Encountered

Following is a summary of the major kinds of problems encountered through both the MOEC and IS&T experience:

- The fact that the values and operational norms are different for the different sectors can be very problematic. A business/industry executive who is used to having his/her directives followed immediately and without question does not always appreciate the fact that professionals from public education, including the university, prefer to make decisions as a committee.
- The leverage of money from certain sectors is powerful, and, with money, influence usually comes. On the other hand, faculty are proud of their autonomy. Distinguishing the boundaries of involvement up front will help to avoid stepping over the lines.
- The university is so unique an organization in climate, governance, and authority structure that most individuals outside it cannot fathom its actual nature. For example, a private firm's president might approach a university president to request help from expert faculty, and even be willing to pay, yet the university president cannot automatically assure the collaboration. A partnership may need to be negotiated with the individual faculty member.
- It is often difficult for university personnel to step aside from the roles of experts. In order for equality-based dialogue to take place, university faculty and administrators must make a concerted effort not to be imposing or domineering in their approach.
- A difficulty with collaboration can be the impatience that arises when trying to allow the time needed for consensus. If two individuals need to agree on a course of action, it may take X hours of conversational exchange. If 10-25 people need to come to agreement, the meetings can easily extend over months. This can be frustrating for everyone involved.
- Finding common ground is especially important when there are differences in values. Why waste time and energy working collaboratively on areas of conflict? Choose rather to work on areas of common interest that are mutually beneficial. For example, if the business community wants to be involved in public education, a natural and good place is within the School-to-Work initiatives, rather than in helping to select the elementary reading curriculum.

Effective Practices

We have learned from our experiences that effective practices revolve around ensuring adequate resources and commitment, and building a solid trust. At the University of Nebraska at Omaha we were fortunate to have had a chancellor for 20 years who understood education and the importance of partnering with the community. That long-standing commitment has served the institution and its community neighbors well.

It takes much time and energy to set the stage for collaboration to occur. When a structure for sustaining the collaborative has been created, continuity is less dependent on individual personalities. Conversations that are ongoing will lead to opportunities to build or create even more joint ventures. Additionally, beginning with the assumption that everyone at the table is an equal partner with a valuable perspective and good ideas to contribute is an imperative.

The university needs to recognize that investment in collaboration on the part of external entities comes with expectations. Time and money given require accountability. Outcomes are expected—benefits to the collaborators are important to continued collaboration and support.

Conclusions

We have outlined here the history, structure, problems, and benefits of two cross-sector collaborative initiatives from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Both are models suitable for adaptation elsewhere. The MOEC model makes use of ongoing discussions and projects to assure effective interaction, and it evolved into a formal structure that facilitates collaboration in many areas. The IS&T design process is more fluid, dynamic, and interactive. It can be used not only for new program development, but also in program revision and improvement. The IS&T process probably reflects the direction that academia must follow in the future to assure that constituents are involved and supportive.

A great deal of our work with MOEC and IS&T has been about change, both the willingness and the ability of the university to address needed change in a timely and responsive manner. Many of the old ways of doing business in higher education will no longer suffice. Universities that isolate themselves from the change all about them will isolate themselves from future students and from the long-standing support of constituents. Alternative providers are increasing in number and scope, prepared to do battle with those universities that continue to resist change in content, process, and

delivery. The ongoing success of our work with cross-sector collaborations such as MOEC and IS&T should position the University of Nebraska at Omaha well ahead of the change curve that now confronts all of higher education.

Declaration of Metropolitan Universities

We, the leaders of metropolitan universities and colleges . . .

- reaffirm that the creation, interpretation, dissemination, and application of knowledge are the fundamental functions of our institutions;
- accept a broad responsibility to bring these functions to bear on our metropolitan regions;
- commit our institutions to be responsive to the needs of our communities by seeking new ways of using resources to provide leadership in addressing metropolitan problems through teaching, research, and service.

Our teaching must:

- educate students to be informed and effective citizens, as well as capable practitioners of professions and occupations;
- be adapted to the diverse needs of metropolitan students, including minorities and underserved groups, adults of all ages, and the place-bound;
- combine research-based knowledge with practical application and experience, using the best current technology and pedagogical techniques.

Our research must:

- seek and exploit opportunities for linking basic investigation with practical application, and for creating interdisciplinary partnerships for attacking complex metropolitan problems, while meeting the highest standards of the academic community.

Our professional service must:

- develop creative partnerships with public and private enterprises that ensure the intellectual resources of our institutions are fully engaged in mutually beneficial ways;
- include close working relationships with elementary and secondary schools aimed at maximizing the effectiveness of the entire metropolitan education system;
- make the fullest possible contribution to the cultural life and general quality of life of our metropolitan regions.

