

# **Creating Tomorrow's Future Today: 2011 CUMU National Conference in Indianapolis**

Mary L. Fisher and Charles R. Bantz

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) was honored to host the 17th Annual Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities Conference October 9–11, 2011. This year's conference theme, "Creating Tomorrow's Future Today," offered a forum for colleagues to articulate their work as leaders in urban and metropolitan universities. In planning the conference theme, we selected topical areas that would allow for broad discussions about contemporary issues of interest to the CUMU conference participants:

- University/community urban planning
- Educational infrastructure
- Environmental threats and remediation
- Wellness and public health
- Community partnerships for student experiential learning
- Faculty roles with strong ties to the community
- Niche academic offerings
- Community partnerships that extend the university's reach
- University's contribution to the cultural growth of the community
- Translational research and its impact on the community

In all, we hosted more than 250 registrants, many of whom also were session or poster presenters, as well as leaders of round table discussions.

## **Keynote Speakers**

**Allison Melangton**, President and CEO of the 2012 Indianapolis Super Bowl Host Committee, kicked off the conference as opening plenary speaker. She brought more than twenty-five years of national and international experience in sports and events management to Indy's Super Bowl. Melangton has worked at seven Olympic Games

as an Associate Producer of the Gymnastics Competition and won four Emmy Awards for her work. She discussed the citywide coalition that submitted the winning Super Bowl bid as well as the impact of such a major sporting event on the campus and community. She highlighted the many IUPUI faculty, students, and staff involved in planning committees and volunteer opportunities. IUPUI tourism management students participated through internships associated with the project. Additionally, Melangton outlined the lasting impact of Indianapolis' unprecedented Super Bowl projects—housing redevelopment and the Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center.

**Jamie P. Merisotis**, President and CEO of the Lumina Foundation for Education, the nation's largest private foundation committed solely to enrolling and graduating more students from college, presented during Monday morning's plenary session. Long a champion of the idea that higher education enhances both society and individuals, Merisotis has worked for decades to increase educational opportunity among low-income, minority, and other historically underrepresented populations. Because of the policy implications of his talk, the speech is presented in its entirety in this volume of *Metropolitan Universities*.

Over a forty-year period, community stakeholders came together to establish Indianapolis as an amateur sports capital, which made it an attractive place for the new NCAA Headquarters, which now is adjacent to the IUPUI campus. During the conference, NCAA President **Mark Emmert** spoke at the closing gala, held at the NCAA Hall of Champions. Emmert, former president at the University of Washington, became the fifth NCAA president on November 1, 2010. He discussed "Urban/Metropolitan Universities and Intercollegiate Athletics: Special Issues of Place."

**Dewitt Jones** is one of America's top professional photographers with a career stretching over twenty-five years. As a motion picture director, he had two films nominated for Academy Awards before he was thirty. Twenty years as a freelance photographer for National Geographic earned him a reputation as a world-class photojournalist. He closed the CUMU conference with an inspirational multi-media talk titled "Clear Vision." This public event was open to the entire campus and local community, as well as conference attendees. Vision is needed to create tomorrow's futures, and the talk provided a passionate and visionary path that conference attendees could take back to their home campuses.

## **Unique Features of the Conference**

The planning committee worked hard to best showcase the Indianapolis community and the IUPUI campus. Sunday started off with a showcase bus tour that led participants to nearby community venues where the university engages with the community to solve local issues, meet citizens' needs, and educate students toward civic-minded citizenship.

Each morning, diehard exercise enthusiasts were led on a canal walk/run by energetic undergraduate students from the School of Physical Education and Tourism Management. IUPUI's prime location to the downtown canal system and White River State Park made this option a popular outing.

Monday afternoon, more than thirty registrants participated in the Campus Arts Walking Tour, led by Herron School of Art and Design Dean Valerie Eickmeier. Some of the many notable sculptures on campus were visited and critiqued by Dean Eickmeier.

## **Articles in This Volume**

This year's articles are strong examples of the many outstanding presentations offered at the conference. They exemplify the overall quality, general reader interest, and impact of the ideas presented.

### **Educational Infrastructure**

Uday Sukhatme (IUPUI) — “New Revenue Streams and Educational Infrastructure at IUPUI”

IUPUI's dynamic academic planning process of the last five years is highlighted in this article by the Dean of Faculties, Uday Sukhatme. Eleven major initiatives, their impacts, and outcomes are described as well as key aspects that enhance revenue streams to make an ambitious plan successful. Data-driven decision-making helps target resources to areas that have been proven to have a positive impact on student outcomes in pilot projects. Expansion of successful projects to larger numbers of students, while maintaining an eye on assessment outcomes over time are key elements of the plan's overall success and impact.

Sarah Baker, Mary Fisher, and Kathy Johnson (IUPUI) — “RISE to the IUPUI Challenge: High Impact Practices Focused on Students' Success”

“RISE (**R**esearch, **I**nternational Study, **S**ervice Learning, and **E**xperiential Learning) to the IUPUI Challenge is an initiative aimed at institutionalizing co-curricular learning experiences aligned with ‘high impact practices’ (Kuh 2008) that help foster student learning and success.” A variety of active learning strategies ties students to the community through applied experiences that impact real-life organizations, people, and communities. Students become engaged learners, thus improving their retention in college and the relevance of their learning for future career opportunities. The RISE experiences are documented on the student's transcript at graduation if they meet the challenge of attaining two of the four types of experiences. The launch of the program is discussed and data from the first two years are summarized. Future plans for assessment, modification, and development of the program are outlined.

Debra Meyers, Victoria Berling, and Kevin Corcoran (Northern Kentucky University) — “Creating a New Future: Recruiting and Retaining Nontraditional Students”

The complexity of identities realized by nontraditional students impacts their educational attainment, but often are poorly understood. Adult learners in northern Kentucky were surveyed to better understand their complex needs as they balance multiple roles. Convenience often trumps other considerations for these students as they select an online class, for instance. Flexibility in scheduling, clear learning goals, and paths to attainment, as well as sufficient course offerings for them to achieve their academic goals, are important. Credit for prior life learning held the largest gap between importance and satisfaction. The article discusses specific strategies used by the university to address these students’ concerns as it worked to balance academic rigor demanded by the faculty with student access and convenience desired by nontraditional students.

### **Experiential Learning**

Cynthia Stone and Marion Greene (IUPUI) — “Health Impact Assessment as a Student Service Learning Experience”

Public health faculty created a graduate-level course to teach Health Impact Assessment, a methodology designed to evaluate the health effects of a proposed program, project, or policy. Students in the course conducted a rapid assessment of the health impacts of expanding bus services for the city of Indianapolis. The implications of such data-driven decision-making on health policies are obvious.

### **Niche Academic Offerings**

David Rausch and Elizabeth Crawford (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) — “Building the Future with Cohorts: Community of Inquiry”

Communities of learners (inquiry) and other cohort models, which included hybrid learning and online program components, are described and related to academic rigor and persistence to degree. Engagement of the “community” (learners) to form a sense of belonging provides the basis for success and group norms. Research is on-going related to this model.

### **Community Partnerships That Extend the University’s Reach**

Ace Fellows: Sandra Haynes, Paula Krebs, Julie Buehler, and Clarendia Phillips — “Building Tomorrow’s Higher Education: Leadership, Partnerships, and Communities”

Four ACE Fellowship projects are described as they worked with urban communities to 1) create college-town developments, 2) establish a center for urban water stewardship, 3) facilitate reverse-transfer with a local community college, and 4) set up and cultivate partnerships with local businesses. The

fellows took away the idea that collaboration can increase institutional capacity, both for the good of the university as well as their community.

## **Translational Research**

Kathleen Brady (University of South Carolina Upstate) — “The Metropolitan Studies Institute at USC Upstate: Translational Research that Drives Community Decision-Making”

The Metropolitan Studies Institute (MSI) is described based on the impact of its translational research on the quality of life for residents in an area characterized by low educational attainment and income. Economic development is targeted based on data gathered through strategic use of the university’s scholarship and outreach capabilities. In this economic environment, “it behooves institutions to widely demonstrate their relevance to the community . . .” and the translational nature of the work of MSI allows for showcasing return on investment to state funding decision-makers.

Lynton Award Winner, Katherine Lambert-Pennington (University of Memphis) — “Pursing Engaged Scholarship in an Age of Austerity: A Postcard from Memphis”

In the wake of social change and economic constraint brought on by the recession, this young faculty member reflects on the pressures to use engaged pedagogies, advocacy, and social justice as foundations for scholarship in comparison with the equal pressures to engage in more traditional positivist research in the field of anthropology. As a tenure track faculty member, she was mentored in this new, engaged research format. Two local research initiatives are discussed. Department culture and institutional supports needed for the success of such engagement are analyzed.

## **Summary**

This year’s conference showcased many papers that represent the best of our urban universities. Each one focused on data related to partnerships that serve both an educational and community renewal purpose. In many ways, CUMU urban universities are anchors for their cities in troubled times. Whether preparing homeless citizens for resume building in the public libraries or creating oral histories for city cultural preservation, CUMU universities are engaged and making a difference. Through initiatives related to disaster preparedness, childhood burn prevention, art therapy, and wellness promotion, the impact of CUMU universities on the health of their cities is clear. We are creating engaged citizens for our cities through the many unique and creative educational programs reflected in conference papers.

We invite you to read examples of these great efforts through the papers in this volume and to plan to attend next year’s CUMU conference scheduled for Chattanooga, Tennessee, October 13–16, 2012. The theme will be “Working Together Works: Partnering for Progress.”

## References

Kuh, George D. 2008. *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

## Author Information

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