

Working Together Works: Partnering for Progress 2012 CUMU National Conference in Chattanooga

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The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) was honored to host the 18th Annual Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities Conference October 13-16, 2012. This year's conference theme, *Working Together Works: Partnering for Progress*, created a rich opportunity for colleagues from urban and metropolitan universities across the country to network and share strategies and successes. Our goal in planning the conference theme was to create opportunities for a wide variety of topics and contemporary issues of interest to the CUMU conference participants, including:

- Real learning for real life: partners for progress
- University/community partnering
- Non-traditional educational infrastructure
- Environmental initiatives
- Wellness and public health projects and possibilities
- Community partnerships for student learning
- Faculty roles with strong ties to the community
- Extending the university's reach through community partnerships
- Translational research and its impact on the community
- Local learning communities

In all, we hosted more than 175 participants. A large number of attendees presented sessions or posters, or hosted round-table discussions.

Keynote Sessions

Dr. Fred Obear, Dr. Bill Stacy, and Dr. Roger Brown, Chancellors Emeritus, kicked off the conference with an opening session titled “The University Renaissance: The Three Chancellors.” This session featured the three former chancellors as they shared their successes and challenges with providing leadership for a metropolitan university from 1981 to 2012. Over the past thirty-plus years, these three Chancellors have been integrally involved in forging and maintaining the partnerships necessary for a successful metropolitan university in an urban setting. Frederick W. Obear served as Chancellor of UTC from 1981 until 1997 and again in 2004 to 2005. Under his leadership at UTC, the campus added several critical undergraduate and graduate programs, including bachelor’s degrees in physical therapy and legal assistant studies and graduate degrees in nursing, accounting, public administration, and environmental sciences. Upon Obear’s retirement—the first time—Bill Stacy took the reins in 1997 and served as UTC chancellor until 2004. During his tenure, the campus experienced an unprecedented construction boom, adding the south campus housing; a major expansion of the university center; and the engineering, mathematics, and computer science building. Roger Brown assumed the chancellorship at UT Chattanooga in 2005. Under his leadership, the campus experienced record enrollment growth at all levels, including the enrollment milestone of surpassing 11,000 students in fall 2011.

A Renaissance City

A number of unique keynote presentations were made by community leaders discussing the various aspects of the renaissance of Chattanooga, including downtown development, economic rebuilding and revitalization, and the development of the Gig City—an initiative that takes advantage of Chattanooga’s access to the United States’ first and largest gigabit per second network by recruiting “geek” entrepreneurs and students to the community.

Dr. Jordan Karubian, recipient of the 2012 Ernest A. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement for Early Career Faculty, was the speaker for the presidential luncheon on Monday, Oct. 15. Dr. Karubian is Assistant Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Tulane University. His presentation, “*The Promise of Engaged Scholarship for Understanding and Conserving our Natural World*,” highlighted his work in Northwest Ecuador, which has one of the highest concentrations of both species diversity and human populations, and is considered a “conservation hotspot,”—a focal point of the growing environmental crisis. It is there that Dr. Karubian, in collaboration with a team of community members, students, and professionals working in the environmental sphere, has developed a multifaceted community-based program to enhance stewardship of the environment and the welfare and conservation capacity of local residents.

Unique Features of the Conference

The Chattanooga CUMU Planning Committee was dedicated to providing a showcase of Downtown Chattanooga, the UTC campus, and the greater Chattanooga area. Optional tours of the city and surrounding historic landmarks, early morning exercise options on foot or by bicycle, and a tour of the UT Chattanooga campus enabled participants to experience the city in a variety of different ways.

The conference wrapped up with a tour of the new state-of-the-art Volkswagen plant. The combined partnership of the Volkswagen Corporation, the City of Chattanooga, and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga illustrates one of the best demonstrations of the conference theme—*Working Together Works*.

Articles in This Volume

The articles this year are great evidence of the excellent presentations that were given at the conference. They demonstrate the quality, dedication to learning, and breadth of interest of the concepts and examples of metropolitan universities and engagement with their partners that CUMU exemplifies.

Service Learning

Mark Giese (UALR). “Moving From the Classroom to the Workplace: A Service Learning Case Study of a Media Production Capstone Course.”

This is a case study of how a capstone course, Producing and Directing, evolved into a service-learning course designed to provide graduating students with real-world workplace experience. It will examine issues including course structure, grading issues, course and client logistics, unaddressed skill sets, group work, and work-product quality issues. It looks at what has worked and what has not worked in an effort illuminate ways to replicate the successes of the course.

Carolyn Hilarski (SUNY Buffalo State). “Building Student Self-Efficacy and Mastery of Skills through Service Learning Partnerships.”

Undergraduate students (n = 40) responded positively to a semantic differential scale after experiencing a ‘direct practice’ service learning group work course. Qualitative data documented student’s perceptions of increased skill levels relating to self-efficacy—understood as positively influencing mastery of skills and performance outcomes—a pedagogical model to consider for competency-based curriculums.

Carnegie Classification and Recognition

Deborah Elwell Arfken and Susan Ritz (UTC). “Engaged with Carnegie: Effects of Carnegie Classification Recognition on CUMU Universities.”

This paper provides the results of a survey sent to all thirty-two CUMU institutions that have received the Carnegie recognition and specifically examines 1) reasons for applying for the elective classification; 2) level of pride instilled in campuses; and 3) level of impact on institutional identity and culture, institutional commitment, curricular engagement, and outreach and partnerships.

Teacher Preparedness

Pamala J. Carter and Kay W. Cowan (UTC). “Confidence and Preparedness to Teach: Conflicting Perspectives from Multiple Stakeholders.”

The article, “Confidence and Preparedness to Teach” is a quantitative study that examines the level of preparedness for the classroom of fifty-seven student teachers. The student teachers, their cooperating teachers, and the professor-in-residence who monitored the placement completed a twenty-four item survey that rated the prospective teacher’s preparedness for the classroom. The survey items were aggregated by domains and responses from the three different groups were compared for responses that were similar and dissimilar.

Campus Community Connections

Kathleen A. Hanna (IUPUI). “Campus and Community Connections: The Evolving IUPUI Common Theme Project.”

In 2009, IUPUI launched the Common Theme Project, designed to “promote campus unity, conversation, and collaboration on timely issues that connect IUPUI to central Indiana and the world.” This paper briefly discusses the evolution of the Common Theme Project, from its roots as a freshman common reader to the current campus focus on social entrepreneurship, strategies that increased campus and community interest, and our goal to move from “project” status to a campus initiative that will enhance IUPUI’s commitment to outreach and engagement.

Barbara C. Medley (UTC). “Effective Engagement: Lessons from Faculty Roles in Community Involvement.”

The role of individual faculty in community service at institutions of higher education has been less studied due to its association with personal volunteer work. This paper suggests that such service should be viewed as an integral part of engagement, particularly when it contributes to positive change and problem resolution in urban communities. Three examples of such involvement are presented as modified case studies, highlighting work of faculty at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Edna Ross and Fannie M. Cox (UofL). “Partnering with a Homeless Shelter to Provide Authentic Community Involvement.”

Hotel Louisville is owned and operated by Wayside Christian Mission and is staffed by screened and vetted Wayside resident clients. This unique situation, along with the University of Louisville (UofL) partnership, positions both as national exemplars for authentic community involvement with higher education. The purpose of this article is to describe the Hotel Louisville/UofL partnership, discuss the positive impact of UofL’s collaboration with Hotel Louisville, and to highlight some of the dramatic successes.

Mark Winston (Rutgers). “University and Community Partners in Oral History Projects: Fulfilling the Urban University Research and Service Mission within the Complexity of Engaged Scholarship.”

Central to the urban university’s academic mission is supporting scholarship that expands knowledge and “service to the state” and local region. Documenting local history is an aspect of scholarship that supports the community directly. This manuscript addresses the role of the urban university in collaborating with community organizations on oral history interview projects, which offer a compelling presentation of the lived experiences of interviewees.

Summary

This year's conference showcases many papers that represent the best of our urban and metropolitan universities. The papers focus on working partnerships between universities and their local constituencies that are designed to maximize the benefits to all parts of the community. In a rapidly changing world, CUMU metropolitan and urban universities strive to provide service and add value through continued engagement with community partners. Whether they are preparing students for the future through service learning, demonstrating the impact of the CUMU status, preparing new teachers for educating local students, or highlighting the ongoing connections between universities and their local partners, CUMU universities are engaged and making a difference. Through these partnerships and our many diverse educational programs, CUMU members continue to foster the development of engaged citizens for our communities and beyond.

We invite you to read the papers presented here that demonstrate the commitment of all the authors and the metropolitan universities they represent. Please plan to attend next year's CUMU conference scheduled for the University of Louisville, October 26–29, 2013. The conference theme is *Transforming and Sustaining Communities through Partnerships*.

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