

Partners for Campus Community Engagement

Executive Summary

Community Partner

PCCE

Student Consulting Team

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Background

Partners for Campus-Community Engagement (PCCE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering equitable and just relationships between higher education institutions and their surrounding communities, primarily in New York and Pennsylvania. Its mission is to convene partnerships and facilitate civic engagement initiatives that promote democratic values and advance the public good. Through programs and grants, PCCE addresses key societal challenges such as food security, affordable housing, sustainability, prison education, and pathways from K-12 to higher education, aiming to create meaningful, long-term impact.

PCCE operates remotely under the leadership of Executive Director Dr. Dave Harker and Grants & Financial Manager Michele Lowrey, with monthly in-person staff meetings. The organization is primarily funded through membership dues (60%) and external grants and contributions (40%), but it faces financial sustainability challenges due to fluctuating school participation and funding uncertainty.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The PCCE currently faced the challenge of lack of digital communication and data management. The organization relies on tools like Notion and Google Sheets to manage member outreach, collaboration, and data tracking, leading to inefficiencies and limited visibility across its growing network. The absence of a centralized and interactive digital platform makes it difficult for member institutions to connect, share resources, or identify partnership opportunities, while staff struggle with manual processes and scattered data inputs.

Project Vision

Our project goal is to implement a centralized and interactive data map that allows PCCE members to visualize, explore, and update institutional information, share resources, and identify areas for collaboration. The tool is designed to streamline internal processes while enhancing real-time visibility and engagement across the member network.

Project Outcomes

The CMU team successfully delivered an ArcGIS-powered interactive map that displays all institutional member data in a user-friendly format. We implemented a live data pipeline using Google Sheets, allowing member information to automatically sync to the map. Additionally, a Google Form was created to enable members to submit updates, with an automated data-clearing script to format entries before integration.

Project Deliverables

1. ArcGIS Map: a fully implemented, centralized map that displays all PCCE member institutions with interactive filtering features to enhance data exploration and partner discovery.
2. Google Spreadsheet for data storage: a structured and organized spreadsheet that serves as the central database for all institutional data shown on the map.
3. Google Form for data updates/collection: a user-friendly form that allows PCCE members to submit updates to their institutional information, streamlining the data collection process.
4. Script for Data Automation: a script embedded into the spreadsheet that automatically formats submitted responses and generates accurate geolocation data (latitude and longitude) for each institution.
5. Map and Spreadsheet Management Guide: a documentation and a recorded video that walk PCCE staff through how to update and manage both the map and the linked spreadsheet.

Recommendations

To ensure the information on the map is up to date and the platform is engaging, it is recommended to implement an annual data collection campaign. This involves regularly sending the Google Form to member institutions to encourage updates to their institutional information. Additionally, PCCE should assign a dedicated staff member to oversee the map and spreadsheet, ensuring that incoming data is reviewed for accuracy and consistency. We also suggest embedding the interactive map into PCCE's official website to increase visibility and ease of access for members, while using privacy settings where necessary to protect sensitive information.

Student Consulting Team

Anqi Chen served as the team's note-taker and task tracker throughout the project. She is a fourth-year student majoring in Information Systems, with an additional major in Human-Computer Interaction.

Shanting Hou served as the project lead. She is a fourth year student majoring in Information Systems. She oversees the project timeline and tasks on each milestone and is also the main communicator with the client.

Jack Sun served as the technical lead for form data processing and deliverable preparation. He is a fourth year student majoring in Information Systems.