

Lamb School Outreach and Engagement Hub

*Needs Assessment and Final Summary
Report - 2021*

By Nicole Dwenger, Christi Eden, Tyler Van Wyngarden, Patricija Miskinyte,
and Anna Szolwinski

Lamb School Outreach and Engagement Hub Report

Executive Summary	4
University Needs	5
What the University is Doing	5
What the Lamb School is Doing	6
Key Findings	6
Community Needs Overview	8
Background	8
Key Findings	9
Final Thoughts	10
Student Engagement Overview	10
Background	10
Key Findings	12
Final Thoughts	13
Alumni Engagement Overview	14
Background	14
Key Findings	15
Final Thoughts	15
Hub Overview	17
Boiler Communication	17
Co-Curricular Engagement	17
Expertise	17
Internships	18
Outreach	18
Hub Phases	19
Phase 1	19
Phase 2	20
Phase 3	20
Overall Assessment Findings and Conclusions	22
Research Methodologies	23
Appendix A: References	25
Appendix B: Community Survey Questionnaire	26

Appendix C: Community Interview Questions and Participants	28
Appendix D: Alumni Interview Questions and Participants	29

Executive Summary

Boiler Communication, the student-run marketing and communication agency at Purdue University, has compiled this report to study the need for increased co-curricular engagement and present the Lamb School Outreach and Engagement Hub as a solution to this need. Specifically, we assess needs within university administrators, the surrounding community, student engagement, and alumni engagement.

In the University Needs assessment, we report on the results of interviews and surveys of Purdue administrators. Through this data, we demonstrate the necessity of engagement for research and discovery. Additionally, we present increased involvement as a fast-track to utilizing research in ways beyond publication in peer-reviewed journals.

In the Community Needs assessment, we report on the results of interviews and surveys of community leaders. The conducted research shows that local businesses and nonprofits strongly desire increased relationships with Purdue departments, especially students addressing communication needs.

In the Student Engagement assessment, we analyze current engagement opportunities within the Lamb School. We also assess ways we need to adapt our engagement strategies to meet the changing demands of our students and help prepare them for their careers.

In the Alumni Engagement assessment, we report on the results of interviews and surveys of Lamb School alumni. The collected data shows the relationship between providing engagement opportunities and alumni involvement, retainment, and giving back after they graduate from Purdue.

Together, these reports demonstrate the overall need and importance of increasing co-curricular engagement at the University and for the promotion of discovery and engaged learning among current students. We also describe our research methodologies and a final assessment.

Following the needs assessment reports, we outline the Hub of Outreach and Engagement plan, demonstrating how it is the solution to our needs and showing it as the logical next step for continued growth and development.

University Needs

What the University is Doing

While Purdue is currently experiencing unprecedented [success](#) in undergraduate education, we would be naive to think there is not room for growth. The world around us is changing and the next generation of students has differing priorities for their plans following high school. Like President Daniels has warned, we must be aware of this changing reality. The arrival of Gen Z brings many challenges to universities across the nation, but especially for those in the Midwest hoping to recruit within. Being the most diverse generation in history, their expectations are different and we need to be prepared.

The Teaching Academy and Associate Deans for Undergraduate Education began a collaborative process to generate the Purdue Road Map for Transformative Undergraduate Education. This group concluded that the biggest expectation for Purdue undergraduate students is learning, and specifically universally beneficial outcomes such as Communication, Ways of Thinking, Interpersonal Skills and Cultural Knowledge, and Intrapersonal Awareness and Development. In conducting sessions to identify learning outcomes, the team also explored the methods in which this type of education should be taught. Academic curriculum must be paired with professional skill development and co-curricular experiences. These must be integrated effectively and whenever possible.

The Purdue Road Map for Transformative Undergraduate Education outlines five major components to address these needs and accelerate Purdue forward as a leader. First, the Road Map explores a need for excellent teaching. This requires a cultural shift where the focus is not solely on research for tenured-track faculty. Understanding and supporting great teaching is a top priority of the Teaching Academy. Second, the Road Map outlines the need for a Hub for Teaching and Learning Innovation, Translation, and Scale-Up. This is primarily achieved through IMPACT as this program works with instructors to find more engaging and effective methods for teaching.

Third, the Road Map calls for more meaningful cross-disciplinary curriculums. Because of the diverse student body incoming and the increased need for having a broader background, stronger partnerships need to be developed across campus. Fourth, the Road Map calls for more connection between in-class and out-of-class experiences by exploring elements of residential campus to increase student engagement. This is

achieved through learning communities effectively as well as through service-learning, study abroad, and other other unique methods of blending residential with academic curriculum.

Finally, the Road Map prioritizes maximizing the potential of all students. First generation students, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, minorities, students with disabilities, and others tend to struggle disproportionately more than other bodies of students. This calls for policy changes and initiatives meant to assist these students for purposes of retention.

The Road Map prioritizes engagement and well-being of students and states that this will be a significant measure of success. While GPA and other standard methods are still important, there is a call for more focus on student well-being through mental health initiatives and a priority on co-curricular experiences.

What the Lamb School is Doing

The Lamb School is working towards improving the number of instructors going through the IMPACT model and increasing the number of experiential learning courses. Additionally, through the implementation of the Director of Co-curricular Engagement role, the Lamb School has started to find the best practices for implementing professional development and co-curricular experiences with a rigorous academic curriculum. Within this initiative, there is a focus on student engagement and well-being through various elements such as the pre-com mentor program, the Lamb School Mentor Program, and the Senior Night celebration. Cross-campus partnerships have always been an utmost priority though there is a lack of formality in these. The school engages in service-learning, study abroad, and learning communities.

Key Findings

Based on the Road Map and the current state of the Lamb School's initiatives, we must be cognizant of some factors:

- Some have been apprehensive towards the new Co-curricular Engagement role. The Hub for Engagement and Outreach would add a level of credibility and allow for the work to continue to advance.
- The Hub for Engagement and Outreach would also serve as a recruitment tool for the dwindling enrollment numbers we are seeing in the Lamb School. Prospective students are looking for ways to gain practical experience to ensure they will have success post-grad.

Lamb School Outreach and Engagement Hub Report

- Opportunity for more residential learning experiences or growth in our existing opportunities should be noted.
- More formalized partnership opportunities and development of interdisciplinary curriculum.
- The Global Landscape has changed greatly, but the tenure process has not. This is an opportunity to promote research in ways beyond peer-reviewed journals.

Throughout administrator interviews, a few key points were presented:

- Engagement is key to discovery
- Outside partnering is important for student success
- Engagement leads to faster translation to the public than peer-reviewed journals
- Engagement emphasizes preparing students for the workforce and lifelong skills

Community Needs Overview

Background

Many businesses and nonprofits throughout Lafayette and West Lafayette could benefit from increased collaboration with Purdue students. This is especially true when addressing the communication needs of organizations focused on work within community development.

In recent years, Purdue University departments and majors have expanded their efforts to get involved in their community through a variety of service-learning courses. One especially impactful example is the English Department's course ENGL 48800 - Internship In Professional Writing. The course is required in the Professional Writing plan of study. Course instructors help students find experiences through the Department's community partnerships, then students work to actually practice the classroom-based, theoretical principles of rhetoric that they learn.

Many of the community leaders that we surveyed and interviewed spoke highly of Professional Writing students, as well as other service-learning coursework. They consistently stated that it helped them recognize and create innovative, research-based solutions to their needs. Harry Smith of GrowLocal Urban Gardens Network, for example, says, "We wouldn't be where we are without the involvement of Purdue and their service-learning projects...Our best marketing deliverable is a video that was created by videography students. Our sponsor Duke Energy said it was one of the best pieces of marketing they've ever seen."

The Lamb School has also taken steps to become more inundated with these types of experiential learning opportunities to better align themselves with the Provost's Road Map. Rachel Ravellette taught COM 495 which was a service-learning course in collaboration with the nonprofit LTHC in Lafayette. This course ran for a few years with students building off of existing internal PR work and research each semester. Christi Eden has implemented service-learning into Boiler Communication (COM 49101) and COM 353 regularly. Additionally, Doug Osman regularly teaches service-learning courses where students create video projects for nonprofits. Finally, Dr. Marifran Mattson serves as a Purdue Community of Service-Learning Faculty Fellow. And while these examples have significantly expanded the Lamb School's reach and reputation in the community, there is still room for growth.

Key Findings

The Lafayette and West Lafayette community consists largely of manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and educational service industries. Additionally, some of the most active voices in the community belong to nonprofits and smaller, family-owned businesses, many of which find success despite their small size, limited funding, or lack of full-time staff to accomplish their business goals.

From our research, we determined the highest priority communication problems that these organizations are experiencing:

- Social media management
- Publication design/marketing materials
- Branding
- Fundraising

At least one of these problems was mentioned by each organizational leader when interviewed or surveyed. Many nonprofit organizations know that they struggle with allocating time and resources to address these priorities. As Prophetstown State Park naturalist Jenna Parks Freeman said, “Social media, videos, and posting are all areas we could always use help on. Those tasks are generally done by whoever on staff is willing.”

Nonprofits cannot afford to invest in internal and external communication or development efforts since their resources are primarily used for the benefit of the often underrepresented communities they are serving. However, as incoming communication professionals, our students have the unique opportunity to empower the incredible work of these organizations through tactics that improve relations with donors, volunteers, community partners, and the service demographic.

Most community leaders reported overwhelmingly positive results from working with Purdue students, either through hiring students as interns, working with a class, or partnering with a student organization. Additionally, almost all survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have a need for communication experts in their organization. “Anytime we work with students, the process always helps us to think about what we need, and often they help solve problems we didn’t even notice we had,” says Audrey Schneider, Director of the Salvation Army.

We surveyed community leaders asking what communication areas they would want to improve if given the resources. Some of the most replied areas include:

- Website development
- Social media management
- Influencer relations
- Grassroots marketing
- Promotional marketing
- Media relations
- Digital media production
- Search engine optimization

Final Thoughts

In conclusion, the Lamb School and Purdue would be highly beneficial in assisting companies in their business objectives. Allocating resources to solidify long-lasting relationships and gain a better pulse of the community would only continue to develop students while developing the community surrounding their college home.

As a public university, community partners will also increase the Lamb School's capacity to engage the community in research initiatives, as well as grants and secure investments. Erika Lee, Director of the YWCA Domestic Women's Shelter, summarizes the potential symbiosis relationship: "Lots of nonprofits have done things the same way for so long, they lose touch of ways to change. For example, what are new ways to fundraise post-COVID-19?" These are the types of questions that research initiatives can explore.

Despite the efforts exhibited by the Lamb School so far, the community obviously needs more assistance. Through the implementation of the Hub for Engagement and Outreach, the Lamb School could more effectively help the community by offering resources online, internship assistance and training, and additional opportunities to work with students directly.

Student Engagement Overview

Background

According to research conducted by the University of Edinburgh, "student engagement is both a route to success and an outcome of excellent teaching." As one

of the top research universities in the nation, Purdue is uniquely positioned to have access to top lecturers and researchers. However, becoming overly reliant on theory and research-heavy coursework in practice-based fields neglects essential aspects of our student's education.

"Classes at the Lamb School are very theory-based," says alumni Emily Sclafani (Class of 2020). "When I was at my first internship, I was asked to do all this tactical work that I had never actually learned." This experience is typical of students who have not had opportunities to bridge the gap between their academic education and its real-world value and application. Another Lamb school alumni, Bailey Hinesley (Class of 2016), recounts a similar experience: "The classes that made me really think and grow were the ones where I was *doing*." While theory is important, oftentimes students do not know how to translate this knowledge and build connections to practical work in the field. Experiential courses bridge this gap and help students gain a comprehensive understanding of their work.

The Lamb School is working to increase its focus on experiential learning, but many of these opportunities are only available through highly in-demand and specific classes with prerequisites and other requirements. These include upper-level COM courses such as Social Media for Social Good, Studio Production, Boiler Communication, and a few others. However, students typically do not get involved with these courses until their junior year or later. This puts our students at a deficit and oftentimes is the reason we lose in-state students to other universities such as Ball State, and to other majors within Purdue University.

Additionally, the Provost's Roadmap for Transformative Undergraduate Education references the changing nature of undergraduate needs. Specifically, Gen Z will bring more diversity and different priorities. This generation does not want tasks for their own sake of completion. Rather, they want to see tangible, beneficial outcomes of their work. The Lamb School has a chance to lead this charge, but it will require faculty and staff to redesign their courses to be more hands-on.

Macey Warren (Class of 2019) says that entry-level professionals are expected to be able to create a wide breadth of work: "As a communications person you are expected to have done it all." The Hub for Engagement and Outreach would provide all students with more accessible options to develop their knowledge and learn how to apply their course curriculum to the real world.

Key Findings

A report sponsored by the National Institute of Education found that two fundamental principles reflect the conditions of educational excellence. First, programs must prioritize student learning and personal development because these two factors directly impact the number of students that engage with the program and to what extent. Second, the program itself must be effective to increase student involvement.

In other words, the research shows that investing more into students will cause students to invest more into serving the programs that help them develop. This has been an issue for the Lamb School for nearly a decade. Despite efforts to create a sustainable model for student organizations, those who are outside of the organization's executive board consistently demonstrate apathy towards attending programming. This in turn causes executive board members to give up investing time and energy into programming.

One reason for this lack of involvement is that many Lamb School students are highly involved in other areas outside of the Lamb School. They simply don't have the time to dedicate to our organizations. Many students cite the inability to become involved with the Lamb School from the beginning as a reason for their uninvolvedness. They express feeling like an outsider before finishing pre-com and by the time they are a major, they are already overly involved elsewhere. Therefore, if the Lamb School can find ways to meaningfully engage undergraduates early on, more juniors and seniors will be dedicated to the continued success of the School and its programs.

Another article stated that "good practice in undergraduate education encourages student-faculty guidance, develops reciprocity and cooperation among students, [and] encourages active learning" (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). In short, we need stronger connections between faculty and our undergraduate students. Mentorship from engaged and experiential learning opportunities is a huge contributor to student success after graduation. According to a Gallup research poll, graduates who strongly agreed that a professor cared about them were 1.9 times more likely to be engaged at work, 1.7 times more likely to be thriving in their wellbeing, and 6.2 times more likely to be emotionally attached to their alma mater.

Students who are actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from their college experience than those who are not as involved, including increased career opportunities following their graduation. Involved students have more

Lamb School Outreach and Engagement Hub Report

experience to put on their resumes, discuss with employers, and build more connections with organizations and people in their industry.

Megan Mussche (Class of 2020) felt the benefit of her experiential learning when she interviewed for her current marketing role at a nonprofit. Coming from a leadership role in Boiler Communication, she went into her interview with a full strategic plan for how she would address the organization's needs. "They told me I was the only one who came in with a plan that included audience segmentation, strategic messaging, and actual tactical work," she says. "They liked that I could see the big picture."

Final Thoughts

In conclusion, while the Lamb School currently offers different engagement opportunities, a centralized hub will consolidate communication efforts and operationalize what we do. Specifically, the hub will offer more experiential learning opportunities, help the Lamb School adapt to the changing demands of the next generation, and do more to prepare our alumni for their entry-level positions.

Purdue is a large university with many, often competing, opportunities that students can struggle to find and get connected with. The Hub of Engagement and Outreach will create more cross-collaboration within the department and college, and help students discover their passion early on in their college career. This may be the difference between a successful, fulfilling time at the Lamb School and one that is lacking.

Nate Piggush, (Class of 2018) did not discover a co-curricular engagement opportunity until the second semester of his senior year. Even in that time, he immediately realized the value of the opportunity: "Boiler Communication's uncompromising, real-world, and client-based structure was so vastly different from any other lecture-based class...it acted as an opportunity for students to uncover tangible value from their degree, and for me, much needed purpose and direction."

Alumni Engagement Overview

Background

As a result of the focus on theory-based courses and the in-demand nature of the experiential courses offered, many students graduating from our program must still invest in a high level of self-education following their graduation. Our course work lacks the thorough education of many areas and tools necessary to a career in the communication field. Examples of areas that need improvement include media relations, earned media, and networking opportunities. While in recent years, we have started to overcome these issues, with a finite amount of resources, we must continue to find innovative strategies to improve.

“The Lamb School needs to offer more experience with media relations and earned media,” says Sclafani. “Now, I do this constantly and [The Lamb School] didn’t offer much of that.” Additionally, Scalfani says that in her time, there was no career fair or professional mentor club she could join. “It was hard to network on LinkedIn to find a job. In communications, it’s all about who you know, so networking opportunities are important.”

Sclafani is not alone in this sentiment. The Boiler Communication Alumni Consultant Network expresses a need for an earned media relations area in the agency, explaining that the Lamb School is not incorporating this element of agency life into its curriculum. Other areas that need improvement include networking and career fairs, as mentioned by Sclafani, and access to important industry tools such as Cision or Brandwatch for all students. Again, efforts have been made to adjust this, but current resources in the Lamb School make it difficult to cover all that may be needed.

Despite the lack of some technical skills, Lamb School alumni are some of the most skilled and professional individuals in the workforce. With alumni all across the nation, Purdue is uniquely placed to administer help from alumni as communication experts and engage with current students. Building deeper connections with alumni can provide insight into improvements and the impact of co-curricular engagement.

Key Findings

Our alumni interviews found that those who were involved had almost all positive experiences with their co-curricular engagement activities. These individuals also report being greatly appreciative of Purdue now that they've graduated and many continue to stay involved post-graduation through alumni engagement initiatives like mentor programs and consultant networks.

These alumni also believe co-curricular engagement and experiential learning opportunities such as Boiler Communication impacted them post-graduation. Alumni report that these experiences provided them with the hands-on skills needed to be successful in their current, full-time roles. Other attributions toward the impact of co-curricular engagement were:

- Discovering their passions in their industries
- Building long-lasting connections
- Having the opportunity to work hands-on
- Meeting new individuals from other majors

While there may be a gap between communication and business scholastically, we found that this is not the case practically. There is very little separation between communication and business in many organizations. The main concern, beyond a lack of applicable knowledge for our students on a big scale, is that our students more often are passed over for a promotion compared to their business school counterpart. While logistically we may not be able to bridge this gap in terms of larger University restructuring, we can generate better interdisciplinary education between business and communication.

Through the Hub of Engagement and Outreach, we can better assist our students and help prepare them for the demands of their entry-level positions. A more involved alumni network can serve as a means for networking with one another through the struggles of employment post-COVID. Beyond the alumni serving in the network, more donations are likely from alumni too. Tangible projects tend to serve as an incentive for individuals to donate rather than to a broad program fund.

Final Thoughts

Alumni are a great resource to utilize in expanding communication efforts. They are extremely knowledgeable and can provide a consistent source of communication expertise. When engaged as undergraduates, alumni are more responsive to their alma

mater and more willing to give back later on. According to a [Gallup poll](#), students who strongly agreed that a professor cared about them as a person were 1.9x more likely to be engaged at work, 1.7x more likely to be thriving in their wellbeing, and 6.2x more likely to be emotionally attached to their alma mater.

These are key contributors to not only alumni engagement and donation, but the overall well-being of our graduates. As alumni Emily Sclafani says “Co-curricular engagement helped me understand my passion for PR. It is in Boiler Communication when I realized I knew it was what I wanted to continue to do after college.” These sentiments were consistent across all alumni interviews and were a significant reason many were so willing to give back to the Lamb School.

Macey Warren (Class of 2019) explained that one week before she graduated, she received an offer from a marketing agency in St. Louis. “My enthusiasm for Boiler Communication and the Lamb School is what was memorable for them,” she says. “It was important for me to interview in-person and express my passion for my experience.” The Lamb School is uniquely positioned to expand on our existing alumni initiatives to continue progressing our School and undergraduates through these strategic relationships.

Hub Overview

Boiler Communication

The Hub will provide more holistic resources for Boiler Communication. According to Tarleton State University and the University of North Texas, student-run agencies should be operated continuously and primarily funded through client fees and university funds while remaining student-run. Successful agencies often have dedicated office spaces to facilitate collaboration and student growth as well. Long-term, these are all goals phased out in the Hub's development.

Increased resources and a dedicated hub for Boiler Communication will fulfill community needs, student engagement needs, and increase our output of engaged alumni.

Co-Curricular Engagement

The Hub develops students by expanding on the traditional curriculum. Interviews with our alumni who were involved in co-curricular engagement clearly demonstrated the impact of these types of opportunities both before and after graduation. Additionally, they would enhance the practical value of theory-based courses.

While co-curricular engagement opportunities such as Boiler Communication, OTHERS, OTHERS and other programs do exist, facilitating a more formalized hub would create growth and collaboration between opportunities.

Expertise

The Hub prioritizes expertise, including the resources, experts, and methods to effectively reach Purdue's campus, community, and the world. By creating a hub for experts at Purdue, the centralized touchpoint will help attract a larger clientele and greater attention nationally. Engaged students are more likely to be involved as alumni, and our Lamb School alumni are more than capable to share their expertise as speakers, consultants, mentors, teachers, or assisting with student projects.

Through the expansion of the Hub, expert roles in web design, journalism, social media management will become more available. These experts will offer more insight to our undergraduate students and the organizations we serve.

Internships

The Hub will extend internship opportunities outwards, expanding into the community, then across the nation. Our community interviews express the current need for interns. Businesses and nonprofits want internships as a part of their organizational operations, and the Hub will create the internship structure on behalf of these organizations, including describing, advertising, training, and mentorship over the course of the intern experience.

The Hub is an opportunity for us to be proactive and develop internship pipelines with companies facing this organizational communication problem.

Outreach

The Hub will focus the Lamb School's outreach efforts to tackle issues plaguing our communities and our nation. In this cultural moment, we are in the midst of a war on truth and a divided, polarized outlook on the media. The Hub's centralization will allow us to offer opportunities such as ethical journalism certifications or other insights into best practices for journalists.

The Hub will dedicate resources to engaging with alumni and outreach efforts, keeping a close pulse on societal and industry patterns.

Hub Phases

Phase One

- Define roles across participating units (Lamb School, Boiler Com, CCSE, WBAA, Purdue Presentation Center)
- Develop guiding documents, including a plan for an intentionally-diverse staff and student environment
- Hire a web developer (n.b., this position is already approved, but has been delayed by the hiring freeze at the university) to begin Hub page, develop resources related to web skills
- Develop basic, on-demand resources, primarily focused on applied communication skills and media literacy
- Network with other on-campus units, local businesses, and nonprofits for potential internship/Boiler Com client needs assessments and begin developing and filling internships
- Develop better processes and support systems for interns and intern providers
- Meet with faculty members in the Lamb School as a group and then individually to determine how we could create new vehicles for their research to make an impact in real life applications.
- Focus first on assistant professors who are working under tenure and promotion guidelines that haven't changed as quickly as the academic landscape
- Develop menu of topical workshops along with a plan to offer them, including fee structures for expert consultations/workshops; fees should be reinvested in the hub
- Work with Development to start a fundraising effort for both the work and the physical footprint of the hub
- Partner with the Office of Engagement to ensure ongoing alignment with Provost's Roadmap
- Partner with Purdue Marketing Communications for media coverage, announcements about hub and news items about applied research resources
- Create processes for continual assessment of impact, needs assessment to inform and shape plans moving forward

Indicators that Phase One is ending include people in Hub leadership roles taking on more programmatic administrative work than building and vision work, and Program administration work becoming too much of a strain on individuals involved, which indicates the need for more help.

Phase Two

- Hire program administrators to keep internship program running and growing
- Develop, fund, and fill .25 and .50 graduate student appointments for industry-bound graduate students to support Boiler Com
- Partner with Development to work on building an endowment for the hub
- Partner with appropriate on-campus units to develop a plan for a capital project with space for all participating units, including WBAA showcase/fishbowl studio
- Expand on-demand resource offerings
- Expand consultation/custom paid-resource offerings
- Expand faculty focus to include tenured professors and their work
- Continue holistic assessments of impact and needs and rely on partnership with Office of Engagement to determine what other spaces we should expand into and develop plans to move forward
- Explore adding hub scholarships for students from underserved, underrepresented communities.
- Build on Boiler Com high school camp model to create high school student recruitment/learning opportunities quarterly

Indicators that Phase Two is ending again include leadership roles becoming more day-to-day focused instead of vision/expansion focused, which indicates the need for more hires and resources. Also, momentum will reach the critical point for capital project funding.

Phase Three

- Hire support staff as necessary; begin to hire for expertise to help mentor students based on needs for interns/Boiler Com (e.g., skills-based experts in digital marketing or client-research)
- Increase graduate assistantships as necessary
- Continue to work with Development to grow endowment for hub
- Complete capital project
- Continue to expand on-demand and paid resource options, anticipating trends across communication industries and responding to current events
- Continue to find new vehicles for making faculty and graduate student research accessible for practitioners

Lamb School Outreach and Engagement Hub Report

- Continue holistic assessments of impact and needs and rely on partnership with Office of Engagement to determine what other spaces we should expand into and develop plans to move forward
- Expand scholarship and recruitment efforts

Conclusions

The Outreach and Engagement Hub builds in opportunities for flexibility and creativity; capitalizes on community and campus partnerships, and increases experiential learning through research, internship, service-learning, and global learning opportunities. These factors are proven to be essential for undergraduate programs such as communication to continue to develop into leading industry innovators.

Additionally, our research shows the needs in the university, community, student engagement, and alumni engagement that the Hub will be uniquely positioned to address and remedy. The plan will align the Lamb School with university values, develop our community, improve recruitment rates, and create dedicated alumni who are more willing to give back and engage with Purdue.

The Hub will be a unified resource that will solve problems while both expanding and consolidating our efforts to be at the forefront of discovery and educational growth.

Research Methodologies

Boiler Communication, Purdue's student-run agency, took a collaborative and comprehensive approach to identify the needs in the community and the benefits of a co-curricular engagement hub. A variety of quantitative and qualitative research components were implemented. These components included the following:

- Interviews with key community members, businesses, and co-curricular alumni
- Survey results from community members and Boiler Communication alumni
- Secondary research of current university needs, student engagement, alumni engagement, and experiential learning

University Needs

- Quantitative Data: secondary research analysis into provost road map, global landscape regarding education, and distributing cutting-edge information to general audiences.
- Qualitative Data: administrator interviews to discover where administrator opinions and advice lie with engagement initiatives at Purdue.

Community Needs

- Quantitative Data: secondary research analysis into the Lafayette and West Lafayette population, its economy, education, demographics, and other statistics; survey distributed to key businesses and nonprofits outlining their problems, internship needs, areas of communication help needed, and willingness to work with Purdue students.
- Qualitative Data: Key community member interviews to discuss areas of improvement in their businesses, internship interest, areas of communication help needed, and willingness to work with Purdue students.

Student Engagement

Secondary research into how engagement impacts a student while in a university and afterward, synthesized through various reputable universities and research articles.

Alumni Engagement

- Quantitative Data: co-curricular impact survey distributed to alumni outlining where current alumni are, post-grad employment, and necessary improvements to co-curricular engagement.
- Qualitative Data: interviews of co-curricular engagement alumni outlining feelings towards Purdue post graduation, their attitudes towards co-curricular engagement during and after their time at Purdue, and recommendations for current initiatives.

Appendix A: References

- Bovill, C. (2020, March 17). Student engagement. Retrieved April 07, 2021, from <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/student-engagement>
- Bush, L., Haygood, D., & Vincent, H. (2016). Student-Run communications Agencies: Providing students with real-world experiences that impact their careers. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 72(4), 410-424. doi:10.1177/1077695816673254
- Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *Biochemical Education*, 17(3), 140-141. doi:10.1016/0307-4412(89)90094-0
- Chorazy, M. L., & Klinedinst, K. S. (2019). Learn by doing: A model for incorporating high-impact experiential learning into an undergraduate public health curriculum. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 7. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2019.00031
- Holliday, M. L., DeFalco, T., & Sherman, J. D. (2015). Putting Impact First: Community-University Partnerships to Advance Authentic Neighborhood Sustainability. *Curricular Innovation: Engaged Capstones at Portland State University*, 26(3).
- Matson, T., & Clark, J. (2020, February 26). Improve student outcomes by building caring faculty relationships. Retrieved April 07, 2021, from <https://www.gallup.com/education/286514/improve-student-outcomes-building-caring-faculty-relationships.aspx>
- Mortimer, K. P. (1984). *Involvement in learning: Realizing the potential of American Higher Education*. Washington, D.c.: U.s. Department of Education.
- Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students. a third decade of research* (Vol. 2). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix B: Community Survey Questionnaire

This survey will help Boiler Communication, Purdue's student-run agency, learn more about the need for internships and/or communication help in the community. This survey should take approximately five minutes to complete. Please answer all questions honestly and accurately. All respondents will remain anonymous.

1. Which category best describes your organization?
 - Arts & Marketing
 - Automotive
 - Business Services
 - Education
 - Financial Services
 - Home Improvement
 - Lifestyle Services
 - Medical & Health
 - Pet Services
 - Personal Care
 - Other

2. Which of the following issues does your organization struggle with? Please select all that apply.
 - Organizational growth
 - Revenue
 - Funding and fundraising concerns
 - Staffing concerns
 - Technology and software concerns
 - Brand recognition or visibility
 - Long-term sustainability
 - Other

3. What is your relationship to Purdue University?
 - Internal
 - External

4. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements. *Note: Respondents were provided a five point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree for the remainder of the survey.*
- There are multiple areas for improvement in our organization.
 - I don't have an issue finding help with company related tasks when needed.
 - I don't have an issue searching for and hiring staff members.
 - I am not looking for any aid or assistance with company related tasks at this time.
5. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.
- There is a need for more internship opportunities.
 - Having an internship program increases productivity.
 - Working with interns is costly.
 - Having an internship program enhances the organization's perspective.
 - Interns would allow the organization to run more efficiently.
 - Interns are not necessary to the function of our organization.
 - Working with interns is time consuming.
6. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.
- There is a need for communication experts in the organization.
 - I am looking for help in communications, liberal arts, or any related fields.
 - Liberal arts majors are sought after in this industry.
 - I could use assistance in website development.
 - I could use assistance in social media management.
 - I could use assistance in influencer relations.
 - I could use assistance in grassroots marketing.
 - I could use assistance in creating promotional material.
 - I could use assistance in media relations.
 - I could use assistance in digital media production.
 - I want to increase search engine optimization results.
7. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.
- I would be willing to work with Purdue.
 - I want to have a greater connection with Purdue.
 - I've been looking for ways to connect with Purdue.
 - I would be interested in hiring Purdue students as interns.
 - I would be interested in working with the student-run agency.

Appendix C: Community Interview Questions and Participants

To better understand the needs of the community and how Purdue Liberal Arts can serve them best, Nicole Dwenger, Christi Eden, Tyler Van Wyngarden conducted interviews with key community members. Specifically, these interviews helped discover community partners and business needs in terms of communication. These needs could be related to internships, projects with our student-run agency, online modules, and more.

1. Tell me a little bit about your company/nonprofit.
2. What problems does your company currently face? Are there steps being taken to address these needs?
3. In your opinion, how would you feel about Purdue students assisting your company in accomplishing tasks?
4. What are your thoughts on internships within your company?
5. Do you need help with communication, liberal arts, or any related fields?

Name	Organization
Jenna Parks Freeman	Prophetstown State Park Tippecanoe Invasive Cooperative Taskforce
Harry Smith	GrowLocal Urban Gardens Network
Audrey Schneider	Salvation Army
Justin Henry	Lafayette Adult Resource Academy
Amy Wood	Lafayette Adult Resource Academy
Ericka Lee	YWCA

Appendix D: Alumni Interview Questions and Participants

To better understand how co-curricular engagement at Purdue impacts alumni, Nicole Dwenger, Christi Eden, Tyler Van Wyngarden conducted interviews with engaged alumni. These interviews helped frame how co-curricular engagement impacted individuals while at Purdue and afterward.

1. Tell me a little about yourself and your background. What were you involved in at Purdue?
2. Did you have a positive, negative, or neutral experience with co-curricular engagement at Purdue? Why do you think that is?
3. In your opinion, did co-curricular engagement influence your time at Purdue?
4. Has co-curricular engagement impacted you once you graduated from Purdue? If not, why not?
5. From an alumni perspective, what do you think co-curricular experiences need in order to be useful for current students?
6. How long after graduating from Purdue did you gain employment in your field? What factors do you think impacted this?
7. What are your feelings towards Purdue now that you've graduated?

Name	Involvement at Purdue
Emily Sclanfani	Boiler Communication PRSSA
Macey Warren	Boiler Communication PRSSA
Megan Mussche	Boiler Communication
Bailey Hinesley	Boiler Communication Association of Women in Communication