The design imperatives of a New American University represent a new way of thinking about the fundamental objectives of a university’s teaching, research, and public service.

September 2006
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating the New American University</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology: Drafting the Plan</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing the Vision (Definition, Goals, Actions)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Strategies</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Appendix*
“Social embeddedness means having long-term, reciprocal relationships with the community. I don’t think the university should be a brain bank that the community makes withdrawals from. It should be a partner, blending into the neighborhood... intermingling.”

- External
The plan, for creating a New American University through social embeddedness that unfolds on the following pages represents two years of work, led by Fern Tiger Associates\(^1\), working together with Arizona State University. In reality, this plan should be seen as a work-in-progress, representing a vision for how ASU and the communities of greater Phoenix can create an ethos that values working in a collaborative – almost symbiotic – partnership to create and support a vital economic, social, cultural, and political region.

In 2008, Arizona State University will reach its 50-year milestone as a university; in 2012, the State of Arizona will celebrate its 100th birthday. The significance of these anniversaries should not be underestimated. Though Arizona and ASU are young compared to national peers, together the state and the university lie at a unique historical crossroad – a moment of opportunity, but also of challenge. It is imperative to seize this moment to build an enduring future.

The 2000 U.S. Census reported the Phoenix Metropolitan Statistical Area as the 14th largest in the United States with a population of more than 3.2 million; according to the Census Bureau’s latest estimates, Phoenix is the 6th largest city in the U.S. In 2002, ASU welcomed its 16th president, Michael Crow. At the time of his arrival, ASU had grown to three campuses (with a fourth “downtown” campus in the early planning stages) and a student population of nearly 60,000. Today, ASU’s Tempe campus has the largest student enrollment in the U.S. (ASU is projecting 100,000 students at its four combined campuses, in the next decade.)

The history of greater Phoenix and the history of ASU are intertwined and the stories of their future will continue to be linked. These are stories of explosive growth and man-made ingenuity. But the changing demographics and the limited natural resources of the region underscore the need for urgent attention to the challenges facing both the University and the greater metropolitan area. As each seeks to meet the demands of growing populations, new ways to maintain and renew the Valley’s social and physical ecology and economies that sustain them need to be identified and developed.

In his 2002 inaugural speech, President Crow described the need to move beyond the traditional university to a “New American University... which is a function of its contemporary environment rather than a replication of an entity that was derived in another setting and another time.” He laid out eight design imperatives which formed what he called the “new gold standard” for the New American University. One of President Crow’s design imperatives is referred to as “social embeddedness” – a concept which is fraught with the weight of numerous preconceived connotations and yet, was not given a tangible definition.

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\(^{1}\) Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) is an Oakland, CA-based national consulting firm, working with the public and nonprofit sectors, and select corporate clients. Since 1978, FTA has been dedicated to bringing about positive social change by providing communities and organizations with an unusual and comprehensive array of services and skills focused on: advocacy documentation; organizational effectiveness; research and public policy; and strategic outreach and communications. FTA was selected through an RFP process conducted by ASU in 2004 to develop a plan that would fulfill the University’s vision of social embeddedness, as mandated through the President’s design imperative. FTA proposed a process to assess the University’s and the community’s readiness, and to develop a set of recommendations based on research described in the Methodology section. Fern Tiger, founder, is a Professor of Practice at ASU’s College of Public Programs.
Still, the concept has a substantial pre-history. Educational institutions have long attempted to reach out to local communities through “community relations,” “partnerships,” “community engagement,” “service learning,” and other programs.

Civic responsibility and community engagement are not necessarily new concepts. They have influenced the mission of educational institutions as diverse as land-grant, Jesuit, and alternative colleges for more than 200 years. Today, hundreds of colleges and universities nationwide boast programs and strategies aimed at improving or enhancing the connections between the university and the community. Across the country, urban universities have recognized the need and importance of “engaging” with local communities, as well as the potential this engagement offers to change the way local people and institutions think about resources and relationships. As ASU embarks on a process intended to increase its “embeddedness” in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area (and more specifically in the communities ASU calls “home”: Tempe, Mesa, Glendale, and Phoenix), there is much to learn from the experiences of other universities across the country.

As part of its work with ASU, Fern Tiger Associates sought out the diverse perspectives of more than 200 individuals from ASU and the greater Phoenix community. FTA assessed community perceptions and tested assumptions through in-person, on-site interviews, with a broad range of people, including ASU administrators, faculty, and staff; community residents and activists; directors and board members of nonprofit institutions ranging from local neighborhood and community groups to statewide organizations; civic and business leaders; urban planners and architects; public and private funders; policy makers; and elected officials and legislators. FTA also conducted a study of best practices in community engagement at more than 75 colleges and universities across the country. The study surveyed the state of university-community relations around the U.S., including focused research on more than 40 colleges and universities (or particular programs at these universities) as well as site visits to interview key players (both university and community leaders) at 15 of these locations. This study identified extraordinary goodwill and many promising programs that offer important lessons for ASU and other institutions which attempt greater levels of engagement with their neighboring communities. However, very few of these institutions evidenced a holistic and integrated set of strategies and goals for reaching out to, engaging with, and forming full, mutually-beneficial partnerships with communities. Nevertheless, in assessing both lessons learned and promising practices, there were many examples of stand-alone efforts which could be pieces of a much larger, coherent, and strategic vision for social embeddedness.

Combining local research and interviews with national visits, and working with a core team of ASU faculty and administrators, a definition and vision emerged that frames the plan presented here. By striving to transform the University through an ambitious vision of social embeddedness, ASU will move toward a true university/community partnership, which will permeate every aspect of the University and the community.

2 Quotes appearing throughout this document are from the 200+ interviews conducted by FTA throughout 2004 and 2005 with people from both ASU and greater Phoenix. See Methodology for additional information.
This process of transformation will demand that ASU look deeply and critically at many established ways of thinking about and operating as a university. At the same time, communities will be pushed, and even provoked, into perceiving and working with the University in an entirely new manner.

At ASU, this vision involves the ongoing integration of five innovative and distinct, yet interrelated, actions:

- **Teaching and Learning**, involving faculty and students in solving problems facing communities.
- **Research and Discovery**, advancing relevant inquiry by valuing community input, knowledge, and needs.
- **Community Capacity Building**, enabling community-based organizations and institutions to become strong and effective by providing support, training, and access to resources and information.
- **Economic Development and Investment**, responding to the needs of both the university and communities as ASU pursues its role as an economic engine.
- **Social Development**, enhancing the well-being of the diverse people and communities of Arizona, by working closely with public and private institutions.

The vision and actions to transform Arizona State University, while building and sustaining the values of social embeddedness, encompass four main goals. Two of the goals relate directly to the University; two goals relate more broadly to the community. The five integrated actions (noted above) are woven thematically into the four goals:

1) Foster a university-wide culture that embraces responsibility for contributing to positive social change in the community and in the research, teaching, and service practices of ASU.

2) Develop internal and external structures and reward systems to encourage and support effective implementation and long-term sustainability of social embeddedness as a core value for ASU and the greater Phoenix community.

3) Work in partnership with the communities of Arizona to increase the state’s social capital and to strengthen the capacity of communities.

4) Establish ASU as a national model for university-community partnership.

The plan encompassed in the following pages describes in detail the goals, strategies, and recommended actions that ASU should take to move towards the accomplishment of a coherent vision of a university which is socially embedded within its regional community. While the plan provides a comprehensive series of goals and strategies for achieving its vision through programs, policies, and structural changes, it does not lay out the logistical or technical aspects of putting the plan into place.
An accompanying section entitled Management Strategies is intended to provide an overview of the broad tasks and decisions that must be undertaken in order to begin and sustain implementation of the goals.

Despite its mandate of innovation, this plan will still require some degree of traditional and fundamental operational elements, including staff; dedicated funding; physical facilities; strategic leadership and communications strategies, as well as materials; a long-term plan for evaluation; and supporting technology.

The Management Strategies section begins the discussion of the strategies, needs, and requirements for each of these elements, including: Staffing; Accountability and Oversight; Engagement, Communications, Outreach; Facilities; Evaluation; Technology; and Funding.

As both ASU and greater Phoenix lie on the cusp of continued growth and expansion, both players – the “New American University” and the “New American City” – have a tremendous opportunity to mutually and positively influence the development of the other. In spite of a good deal of community skepticism about the direction and intentions of ASU as it grows and expands rapidly, it commands a generally strong reputation in the community. Beyond that, there is an overarching platform of political will and commitment to link the skills, knowledge, and resources of ASU with the skills, knowledge, resources, and experiences of the people of the Phoenix metropolitan region. If the vision and dreams for social embeddedness are to be successful, the moment to push forward is now.

The endeavor to “socially embed” or integrate ASU in the greater Phoenix community is a Herculean task, but ASU – together with the people of Arizona – can create enduring, positive change in the dialogue, mindset, and lives of ASU’s students, faculty, and staff as well as greater Phoenix’s leaders and communities for generations to come. The results will not look anything like previous attempts at “community outreach” or “community relations” and will transform traditional service models and approaches into new models of positive community change and empowerment.

“Embeddedness is more than a program – it’s an attitude.”

- External
“There’s an opportunity in Phoenix, and in Arizona more broadly, to build a community that works. It’s an unfinished place that’s open to new ideas.

That creates a huge opportunity.

The challenge is that it’s growing so fast, it’s hard to know how to seize the moment to make something happen.”

- External
In 2008, Arizona State University will reach its 50-year milestone as a university; in 2012, the State of Arizona will celebrate its 100th birthday. The significance of these anniversaries should not be underestimated. For, though Arizona and ASU are young compared to their national peers, together the state and the university lie at a unique historical crossroad – a moment of opportunity, but also of challenge. The leaders – and, indeed, all of the people of ASU, greater Phoenix, and Arizona – have the potential to forge into uncharted territory by creating a new model of collaboration between an incredibly large institution of higher education and the communities that surround it. Such a partnership could transform the university and the state, unleashing the creative energy, intellectual capital, economic power, and grassroots experience and know-how needed to address the broad range of educational, ecological, economic, and social issues facing Arizona today. It is imperative to take advantage of this moment to build an enduring future.

The concepts that unfold on the following pages represent two years of work, led by Fern Tiger Associates, working together with Arizona State University. In reality, this plan should be seen as a work-in-progress, representing a vision for how a university and community can create an ethos that values working in a collaborative – almost symbiotic – partnership to create and support a vital economic, social, cultural, and political region.

Though community members from greater Phoenix have contributed to the content of this plan through extensive interviews, ASU directed the research effort in order to learn and understand how the community perceived it as an institution, and to think through the ramifications of substantial changes in its own institutional culture and structure. It is not appropriate for ASU to dictate what the community thinks or needs. For any joint plan to have validity, it should be reviewed, reworked, and ratified by a broad spectrum of residents and institutional leaders. Through a highly public launch of this draft Plan in the coming months, ASU hopes to begin a mutual dialogue with the larger Phoenix community in order to better understand and reflect the needs and desires of all constituents. Together, it is hoped that ASU and the community can craft a “working plan” that will guide them towards the vision that they share.

Our detractors say, ‘ASU’s job is to take our 18-year-olds, give them a good education, and put them out in the work force. ASU’s job isn’t to change society.’

3 Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) is an Oakland, CA-based national consulting firm, working with the public and nonprofit sectors, and select corporate clients. Since 1978, FTA has been dedicated to bringing about positive social change by providing communities and organizations with an unusual and comprehensive array of services and skills focused on: advocacy documentation; organizational effectiveness; research and public policy; and strategic outreach and communications. FTA was selected through an RFP process conducted by ASU in 2004 to develop a plan that would fulfill the University’s vision of social embeddedness, as mandated through the President’s design imperative. FTA proposed a process to assess the University’s and the community’s readiness, and to develop a set of recommendations based on research described in the Methodology section. Fern Tiger, founder, is a Professor of Practice at ASU’s College of Public Programs.

4 This plan focuses primarily on the steps ASU needs to take to establish appropriate policies, programs, evaluative methods, and outreach to become socially embedded in the communities of Arizona. Once the dialogue between the University and the community begins, a shared work plan will define joint goals and lay out the next steps of implementation.

5 Quotes appearing throughout this document are from the 200+ interviews conducted by FTA throughout 2004 and 2005 with people from both ASU and greater Phoenix. See Methodology for additional information.
The Valley of the Sun and ASU: A Brief History

The Valley of the Sun which became home to the city of Phoenix – and now includes all of Maricopa County – was settled centuries ago by the Hohokam Indians, who are said to have arrived as early as 300 B.C. The Hohokam were the first to tame and farm the desert landscape by tapping precious water from the nearby Salt River through a sophisticated and extensive system of irrigation canals. The Hohokam mysteriously disappeared around 1450 A.D., possibly due to an extended drought. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, numerous Spanish explorers and missionaries fanned out across the state, followed by European and American settlers who gradually moved into the Valley to try their hand at mining and farming in a desert climate. The city of Phoenix was incorporated in 1881 with a population of approximately 2,500 at a time when the Navajos called it Hoozdo – “the place that is hot.”

In February 1885, a House Bill introduced by the 13th Legislative Assembly of Arizona Territory called for “An Act to Establish a Normal School in the Territory of Arizona.” The School set forth a mission to provide instruction “in the art of teaching and in all the various branches that pertain to good common school education; also, to give instruction in the mechanical arts and in husbandry and agricultural chemistry, the fundamental law of the United States, and in what regards the rights and duties of citizens.” Approved by the governor, the Normal School began instruction in February 1886 with 33 students who met in a single room on property donated by private landowners in Tempe.

In 1912, Arizona was declared a state by President William Howard Taft, with Phoenix as its capital. In the decades following, Phoenix emerged as a trade center and the population in the area burgeoned with the expansion of the transcontinental railway, highway systems, and extensive growth of irrigation systems for farming made possible by the Roosevelt Dam. In the 1940s, World War II transformed Phoenix from a farming community into a distribution center, providing mass production of military supplies. Three large military training centers brought thousands of soldiers into Phoenix and in the years that followed, the city grew to more than 100,000.

The Arizona Normal School – subsequently named Arizona State Teachers College and then Arizona State College in 1945 – also experienced phenomenal growth following World War II. The G.I. Bill of Rights greatly increased student enrollment at colleges and universities nationwide. In Arizona, many war veterans who trained in the Phoenix area vowed to return to the place they had come to love. Enrollment at the Normal School grew a staggering 110% from 553 students in the Fall of 1945 to 1,163 students in January 1946. Over the next decade, Arizona State College advanced its academic ambitions by requesting and receiving authority to become a university and in 1958, the College became Arizona State University – quickly establishing and/or reconstituting colleges of fine arts, law, nursing, social work, liberal arts and sciences, and engineering. In reality, the transition from college to university was a long-term process that took place over the course of almost 50 years.
The University has continued to grow and expand, mirroring the growth of the greater Phoenix metropolitan area. The 2000 U.S. Census reported the Phoenix Metropolitan Statistical Area as the 14th largest in the United States with a population of more than 3.2 million; according to the Census Bureau’s latest estimates, Phoenix is the 6th largest city in the U.S. The rapid growth and challenges facing the region prompt many to think that it, and especially the city of Phoenix, have the unique opportunity to create a model for a new American city – sustainable, creative, socially concerned, and “megapolitan.”

In 2002, ASU welcomed its 16th president, Michael Crow. At the time of his arrival, ASU had grown to three campuses (with a fourth “downtown” campus in the early planning stages) and a student population of nearly 60,000. Today, ASU’s Tempe campus has the largest student enrollment in the U.S. (with growth projections to 100,000 at the four combined campuses in the next decade).

The history of greater Phoenix and the history of ASU – of explosive growth and man-made ingenuity – are interconnected and the stories of their future will continue to be linked closely. But the changing demographics and the limited natural resources of the region underscore the need for urgent attention to the challenges facing both the University and the greater metropolitan area. As each seeks to meet the demands of growing populations, new ways to maintain and renew the Valley’s complex and demanding social and physical ecology and the economies that sustain them will need to be discovered and developed.

“I think the west generally, and Phoenix specifically, is really representative of what I would call a new rootless urbanism. And – to some extent – that’s both its promise and its peril... It’s always in a place of perpetual becoming.”

- External
In the 19th century, the American model of a research university evolved when the German “prototype” of an elite, graduate-level, scientific research university was melded with the more typical American-style liberal arts undergraduate institution. Over time, an elite group of U.S. universities came to exemplify the “gold standard” of the American research university. Some of these institutions are private, such as California Institute of Technology, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, and Yale. Others are state or land-grant colleges, including the University of California, University of Illinois, University of Michigan, and University of Wisconsin. Together, these universities have produced the majority of PhDs in the country and have set the tone for teaching and research for generations of undergraduate and graduate students.\(^6\)

In his 2002 inaugural speech, President Crow described the need to move beyond the traditional university to become a “New American University... which is a function of its contemporary environment rather than a replication of an entity that was derived in another setting and another time.” He laid out eight design imperatives which formed what he called the “new gold standard.” Defining what he hopes to be the epitome of the New American University, Crow states that ASU promises “excellence, inclusion, and impact” in all that it does and in all the people that it touches. Thus, ASU strives to meet exceedingly high standards, to be democratic, and to achieve extraordinary results in its teaching, in its research, and as a respected member of a local, regional, and international community. It seeks to reach multiple constituents to provoke their best thinking, to inspire creativity, and to find thoughtful answers to the manifold issues and challenges in civic life, both locally and globally. These constituents include, but are not limited to, ASU students, faculty, staff, members of the administration, community residents, grassroots activists, leaders of community institutions, civic and business leaders, local elected officials, public and private funders, leaders of peer universities, and heads of national and international policy organizations.

One of President Crow's design imperatives is referred to as “social embeddedness” – a concept which is fraught with the weight of numerous preconceived connotations and yet, had no tangible definition, when originally introduced at ASU in 2002. Nevertheless, the concept has a substantial pre-history. Educational institutions have attempted to reach out to local communities through “community relations,” “partnerships,” “community engagement,” “service learning,” and other programs. Many universities have established particular and unique projects within their local communities, and some have created specialized “centers” to address targeted community issues. These institutions consider themselves to be “engaged.” While efforts to work with local residents and leaders are certainly laudable, the approaches have been neither comprehensive nor revolutionary. Evaluations of the success or failure of these efforts have been both few and far between, and often, of questionable value.

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The mandate for social embeddedness proposed and planned for ASU – as framed by the President’s challenge and refined through the two-year planning process leading to the vision, definition, and recommended actions included in this document – encompasses new ways of thinking and an unprecedented level of change throughout the university as well as in neighboring communities. True community engagement will put the resources of this university into reciprocal partnership with the community, and will require delineating expectations of real consequences and real benefits that are well-informed and destined to lead to the transformation not just of the community, but of the University itself: its research, teaching, and service practices, as well as its administrative decision-making.

To be successful, the vision and values of social embeddedness will need to be backed by a clear statement of intent, and concrete examples of how programs and activities are expected to proceed. Additionally, if this effort is to be considered seriously by departments, school directors, and deans, issues of hiring and promotion will need to reflect these values. And, the University will need to work with some long term faculty and staff who feel that the work they have been doing are examples of social embeddedness. Indeed, the plan must recognize efforts which are in place, and address how to shape this work to support the new thinking.

As might be expected, there is a perception across ASU that the newer campuses offer a more accepting venue for change, as they are still in a period of growth and flux, and relatively unhampered by the more established structure of the Tempe campus. But, the University functions as a whole comprised of multiple campuses; thus, every part of the University must ultimately accept the vision of social embeddedness and seek to move in this direction.

There is strong recognition at ASU that the development and growth of the community’s social capital is challenging because of the transiency of residents; the rigid demarcations between “haves” and “have nots” and between newcomers and old timers; well-publicized racial tensions; and vast geographic dispersal that makes “the community” difficult to define and to embrace. Yet, despite these self-criticisms, there is a strong sense of optimism and a belief that now is the time for change, for stability, and for success.

The endeavor to “socially embed” or integrate ASU in the greater Phoenix community is a Herculean task, but ASU – together with the people of Arizona – can create enduring, positive change in the dialogue, mindset, and lives of ASU’s students, faculty, and staff as well as the leaders and communities of greater Phoenix, for generations to come. The results will not look anything like previous attempts at “community outreach” or “community relations” and will transform traditional service models and approaches into new models of positive community change and empowerment.

“The university shouldn’t be an ivory tower, but an enterprise that’s an equal partner in the community. That could be demonstrated in a number of different ways, but it means that they are an integral part of the community, not separate and distinct from the community.”

- External
Social Embeddedness: The Origins

Academics and educational policymakers point to Ernest L. Boyer as the “father” of a modern approach to university/community relations. Boyer had a distinguished career in education, serving as Chancellor of the State University of New York, United States Commissioner of Education, Senior Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy at Princeton University, and finally President of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Over the course of his career, he researched and authored numerous articles and books which shaped the direction of the nation’s educational agenda. Several seminal publications had particular influence on the thinking of university leaders as they sought to develop or enhance relationships with the regional communities surrounding their institutions. The introduction to *A Quest for Common Learning* (1981), co-authored by Boyer and Arthur Levine, President of Teachers College at Columbia University, observed that “the mission of higher education has become muddled.” In *College* (1987), Boyer documented the fragmented nature of the undergraduate experience: Inadequate connections between the academic and social lives of students, and between the campus and the nearby community led to what he called “disconnects.” To remedy this problem, he called for, among other things, greater community service on the part of students.

In *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990), Boyer pushed for a greater degree of faculty involvement beyond the walls of academia. He believed it was critical for the health of local communities, the nation, and the university itself that academics use their scholarly knowledge to benefit the greater good by finding real-world solutions that could make a positive impact on their local communities. (It should be noted that academics almost universally believe that their work benefits a greater good; however, more likely than not, these faculty have defined the “greater good” themselves without any consultation or input from the communities they purport to help or benefit.) Between 1993 and 1995, Boyer made a series of speeches in which he referred to the “New American College” – his vision of an institution which brought together many disparate parts and fragments to create a place which “celebrates teaching and selectively supports research, while also taking special pride in its capacity to connect thought to action, theory to practice.” For the first time, at a conference in March 1995, Boyer used the term “scholarship of engagement” to push faculty members to look beyond their individual projects and units, to find relevant connections across the university and within the community, and to draw those connections into their work in order to enrich the community and not just the project itself.

According to Boyer, the three priorities for the New American College should include:

1) Clarifying the curriculum, realizing that learning is a lifelong process, and that what happens in the classroom may, and rightly should, spill over into the life of the campus and the community;

“The urban engaged university is an institution that takes its location as a central element of who, what, and how it teaches, does research, and provides service. It makes the urban area its subject matter whenever possible, and seeks to actively involve business, government, civic, and community organizations. It realizes that it is not the sole source of knowledge, but that knowledge resides in many sectors, and is best pursued in partnership with others.”

- University of Baltimore
2) Connecting to the world beyond the classroom, which is grounded in the history of land-grant colleges — established to assist agriculture and industry — expanding that concept to create an engaged campus that pursues research to address the most pressing problems facing local and global communities; and

3) Creating a campus community, by building an ethical environment in which individual character and responsibility are taken seriously, and the importance of shared values between the university and community are emphasized.

At about the same time, two of Boyer’s colleagues, Ira Harkavy of the University of Pennsylvania and Wim Wiewel of the University of Illinois at Chicago foresaw a “sea change” in higher education and predicted that “the university of the next century will closely resemble Boyer’s ‘New American College.’”

Numerous organizations, associations, and movements took shape through the influence of Boyer’s work. In 1985, in response to ongoing criticism by the mainstream media that college students were self-absorbed and materialistic, the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford formed Campus Compact, together with the U.S. Education Commissioner. Campus Compact sought to counteract negative media by broadly sharing information about student involvement in community service and promoting civic engagement throughout U.S. campuses and communities. In December 1998, Campus Compact and the University of Michigan’s Center for Community Service and Learning, together with a number of sponsors, including The Johnson Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, held a conference at the Wingspread Educational Center in Racine, Wisconsin. The conference focused on developing strategies for renewing the civic mission of the research university and included presidents, provosts, deans, and faculty members, as well as representatives of professional associations, private foundations, and civic organizations. The conference resulted in working groups and action items, including a subsequent conference planned for the following year.

In July 1999, Campus Compact convened 51 college and university presidents at the Aspen Institute to craft and adopt a shared statement, “The Presidents’ Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education.” The statement articulates the commitment of all institutions of higher learning — including two- and four-year institutions — to a greater civic purpose. By 2004 more than 600 colleges and universities nationwide, including ASU, had endorsed the Declaration. Today, Campus Compact is a network of 31 state offices, representing a coalition of approximately 1,000 college and university presidents (whose institutions comprise more than five million students) committed to furthering the public purpose of higher education.

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“If you’re really interested in the health of the community of which you are a part, it’s important to provide as much as you can. That’s not our primary mission... I understand that. Our primary mission is to educate students. But you can do both. You can provide the intellectual capital and it will mean a tremendous amount for the community.”

- Trinity College

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8 Campus Compact, compact.org
Learning from Campuses and Communities across the U.S.

Civic responsibility and community engagement are not new concepts. They have influenced the mission of educational institutions as diverse as land-grant, Jesuit, and alternative colleges for more than 200 years. Today, hundreds of colleges and universities nationwide boast programs and strategies aimed at improving or enhancing the connections between the university and the community. Across the country, urban universities have recognized the need and importance of “engaging” with local communities, as well as the potential this engagement offers to change the way local people and institutions think about resources and relationships. For at least the last 15 years, a wide variety of university-based community engagement “experiments” have been undertaken in nearly every major city and at every major university across the country, including ASU. As ASU embark on a process intended to lead to increased “embeddedness” in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area (and more specifically in the communities ASU calls “home:” Tempe, Mesa, Glendale, and Phoenix), there is much to learn from the experiences of other universities across the country.

As part of its work with ASU, Fern Tiger Associates conducted a study of best practices in community engagement at more than 75 colleges and universities across the country. The study surveyed the state of university-community relations around the U.S., including focused research on more than 40 colleges and universities (or particular programs at these universities) as well as site visits in 2005, to interview key players at 15 of these institutions.9 (See Methodology.)

This study identified extraordinary goodwill and many promising programs that offer important lessons for ASU and other institutions which attempt greater levels of engagement with their neighboring communities. However, very few of these institutions evidenced a holistic and integrated set of strategies and goals for reaching out to, engaging with, and forming full, mutually-beneficial partnerships with communities. Nevertheless, in assessing both lessons learned and promising practices, there were many examples of stand-alone efforts which could be pieces of a much larger, coherent, and strategic vision for social embeddedness.

Successful, comprehensive approaches have not been easy for universities to create or sustain, though some have forged a shared institution/community will to make it happen -- at some level. For instance, Portland State University’s mission and motto, “Let knowledge serve the city,” is emblazoned on banners, is at the core of the web site homepage, and is in the minds of faculty, staff, and students who have crafted an array of courses and programs, including a

9 University of California, Los Angeles; University of Southern California, Los Angeles; Occidental College, Los Angeles; University of California, Berkeley; Portland State University, Portland, OR; University of Washington, Seattle; University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; University of Illinois, Chicago; Georgia State University, Atlanta; Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta; Trinity College, Hartford, CT; University of Baltimore, MD; University of Maryland, Baltimore; and University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Of these institutions, 12 have more than 20,000 students; 10 are publicly funded; five are private; six are land grant colleges; all are located in major metropolitan areas.

“Occidental chose to use the term ‘community-based learning’ instead of ‘service learning’ because we wanted to communicate true reciprocity from the very beginning. Community-based learning is a conversation where we all say, ‘Let’s talk about it, let’s get things on the table, and let’s see what interests you, and see what you can bring to this project.’”

- Occidental College
required track of courses called “University Studies” which includes a two-year series entitled “Urban Inquiry” and a senior “capstone” which focuses on working closely with local organizations and government on community issues.

The University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) is a land-grant institution whose mission emphasizes serving society in concrete ways. In the 1990s, UIC was looking for ways to distinguish itself in the college-rich city of Chicago. The Great Cities Initiative was developed from the catch-phrase, “Every great city needs a great university,” suggested by a marketing and public relations firm hired to “brand” UIC as a distinctive institution. Created in 1994 and originally housed in the chancellor’s office, the Great Cities Initiative moved to the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) in 1995 and evolved to include The Great Cities Institute (GCI), an interdisciplinary center for applied urban research within CUPPA. GCI uses its annual $1.5 million funding allocation from the state legislature to support its Neighborhoods Initiative and to create incentives for UIC faculty to engage with the community in interdisciplinary research. GCI provides office space and infrastructure for “resident faculty scholars,” as well as small grant awards ($4,000-7,000) through its Faculty Seed Fund.

The University of Pennsylvania, as part of its Penn Compact, created the Center for Community Partnerships which provides course development grants to faculty to assist in the creation of curricula focused on service-learning and community partnerships. These grants have led to the creation of more than 60 courses focused on the issues and needs of West Philadelphia, an inner-city neighborhood comprised largely of low-income households of color. In addition, Penn leads a number of community development efforts – both through the Center, and separate from it – including the management and support of a successful elementary school, a school-based community health education program, and a wide range of economic development initiatives intended to revitalize neighborhoods, through housing, retail, and workforce development programs.

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (UWM) touted a massive community engagement program, The Milwaukee Idea, begun through a community process initially tagged as “100 people, 100 days,” a slogan which represented the efforts to reach university and community members to determine the needs and priorities of the region, and the ways in which UWM could work with the community to attain lasting results. This process very quickly spun into the development of ten major initiatives, undertaken through a collaboration between the University and the community. To help increase visibility, the University engaged a public relations agency to “brand” and widely promote the initiatives. The chancellor became a virtual missionary to spread the message, taking on an unprecedented and very visible leadership role in the Milwaukee community.

Trinity College, a much smaller, private, liberal arts college, committed $175 million of its endowment to community projects in the surrounding Hartford area. In the mid-1990s, the College established the Office of Community and Institutional Relations (OCIR) to act as the “official liaison” between the College and the community (though OCIR does not manage any academic work). OCIR focuses on institutional community relations, government relations,

“The university has to be willing to reach out in different ways. The community has to be willing to have the university in amongst it.”
- Portland State University
adult learning opportunities, youth programs, urban school collaborations, and neighborhood revitalization efforts. One of the largest revitalization projects was the development of the Learning Corridor with the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA)\(^{10}\). Underwritten primarily by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Learning Corridor is a campus which includes four inter-district public schools: a Montessori elementary school, a middle school, and two public magnet high school programs.

Each of these examples point to inspired concepts. Their capacity, however, to fully impact broad decisionmaking at the university’s administrative level, to truly engage the community as equal partners, to deeply transform the relations between the university and the community, and to be sustained over a long period of time, are yet to be evaluated and/or have had varying degrees of success.

To become truly embedded, as described in this document, is an ambitious and unique goal, that will require an all-encompassing process integrating five broad areas of activity: teaching and learning; community capacity-building; social development; economic development and investment; and research and discovery. Additionally, ASU has determined that a plan for a comprehensive, long-term evaluation needs to be designed at the onset which assesses and analyzes related programs and activities, while also measuring the transformation of the University and community. A thoughtfully-crafted mission statement; leadership at the highest levels of the institution; faculty buy-in; criteria which attract and energize like-minded faculty, staff, and students; a true commitment to ongoing engagement with the community (not just public relations); and ongoing sources of funding to support these programmatic activities are all seen as essential for success and sustainability.

If one defines “engagement” or “embeddedness” as the five-pronged strategy articulated in these pages – community capacity building; curricular change based on academic commitment to local social issues and problem solving; academic research and discovery to benefit regional and national communities; community-focused economic development; and a transformation of social development and well-being – it is easy to see that almost every university visited addresses one or more of these strategies. However, examples of universities that care about and invest thoughtfully in all five of them are few and far between, and no institution appears to have fully integrated all five components in any sustained way, nor unified its efforts with a comprehensive evaluation.

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\(^{10}\) SINA was founded as an alliance between five institutions in South Hartford: Trinity, Hartford Hospital, the Institute of Living, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, and Connecticut Public Television and Radio.


“Engagement is the partnership between the university’s knowledge and resources and those of the public and private sectors. Engagement enriches scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhances curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepares educated, engaged citizens; strengthens democratic values and civic responsibility; addresses critical societal issues; and contributes to the public good.”

- University of Minnesota
**Building the Social Capital of the Region**

While the concept of the *New American University* may be viewed as an outgrowth of the movement started by Boyer more than two decades ago, it moves conceptually and in practice -- as defined by this plan -- well beyond the philosophy of student service and faculty engagement. Linked with the other seven design imperatives, the New American University not only provides high quality education to a diverse student body and engages in multi-disciplinary research for the public good, but also takes responsibility for building leaders capable of addressing community and societal needs; generates and sustains appropriate economic growth in the region; and recognizes the importance of discovering solutions to local and global issues. Through these efforts, the university contributes to the economic, social, and cultural vitality, as well as the knowledge base, of the region in which it is located.

Arizona State University is unique among its peers and has many advantages that support the potential for the social embeddedness idea to become reality. It is one of only three major universities in a rapidly growing state. Of those three universities, it has the largest student enrollment, the highest number of degrees awarded, the greatest number of faculty and staff, and the largest budget. The sheer nature of its size and scope makes it an “elephant” in greater Phoenix, and an outsized presence and influence across the state. As the largest university in the state of Arizona, ASU it has an obligation to use its resources to positively impact its community, and in turn to enable the community to impact ASU.

In many respects, the New American University is a response to the changing needs and priorities of urban areas, such as Phoenix, across the United States. From the 1960s to the 1980s, many metropolitan regions experienced declining populations and the onset of vacant, boarded-up downtown centers resulting from racial tensions, “white flight,” suburban growth, and economies changing from manufacturing work to professional and service-oriented jobs. Beginning in the 1990s, policy makers, elected officials, academics, and business leaders – bemoaning the loss of great cities and the vitality of the “urban core” – became champions of the need to renew America’s cities.

Urban planners, civic leaders, and communities themselves have sought the right alchemy to bring life to old cities and to generate vitality in new regions. Academics such as Richard Florida in *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), asserts that the growing international “knowledge economy” requires attracting highly-educated, creative people to an energetic, centralized urban core. These individuals can work anywhere in the world, and choose to work and live in stimulating environments which offer access to varied social, cultural, political, and economic experiences and opportunities. This “creative class” can, in turn, spark the economic and cultural growth of an entire region.

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11 Arizona Board of Regents, Annual Report, 2004-2005
Involvement in communities seems to have come about relatively late in the development of universities’ missions and activities, perhaps reflecting the scale of the institutions, their structure, and the inherent and historical detachment of academia from the life of real communities. Surely, it is not a coincidence that the rise of urban university-community partnerships as a hot topic among academics, foundations, and government agencies came at the same time that inner cities were crumbling, crime was increasing, and central city property values were falling. In numerous instances, it was urban decay and violence in the university’s immediate neighborhood (Trinity College in Hartford, CT; University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia; University of Southern California in Los Angeles, among others) that moved administrators or trustees to embrace community engagement – and devote resources to it – in an effort to keep enrollment up and pacify the parents of future applicants. Regardless of the situational driver behind new engagement initiatives, it became an opportunity for positive change and sometimes a chance to embark on a transformative course.

The open question in each case seems to be whether “community engagement” could be defined merely as local economic development that enhances the quality of life for the university community and its immediate neighbors, or as a comprehensive, multi-modal effort to change the culture of the university and the community of which it is a part for generations to come. One might argue that organizations, of any size, have the right to exist to serve their constituents and are not necessarily mandated or equipped to play a larger role in their communities. Nevertheless, educational organizations that are true to the mission of teaching and learning will realize the benefits greater institutional responsibility can bring, not only to students, but to faculty and staff, as well as to local residents and community leaders. Such institutions will come to see that there is a huge opportunity – and even necessity – to take a leadership role in helping to define the vision as well as the short and long term needs of the surrounding region, while marshaling academic and economic resources to successfully attain the goals of that vision.

How might this vision translate to ASU and greater Phoenix?

In the ideal world of some future time, travelers would arrive in the thriving city of Phoenix and its environs and be delighted, and perhaps a bit perplexed, at how difficult it is to tell where ASU starts and the community ends. They would not know whether the community is transforming the University or the University is influencing the community. In such a dynamic, creative place, the boundaries and firewalls between institutions and individuals; between theory and action; between university “experts” and community “experience;” will have all but disappeared. While the achievement of such a vision may be next to impossible in the “real world,” it serves as inspiration for what can be made possible if the individuals and institutions within a region recognize common needs and dreams, and develop a shared will and responsibility for achieving a mutually desired vision.

“Social embeddedness is a value... It’s not a list... It’s not a program... It’s not a center... We’re talking about instilling a value in the faculty and staff, and in the culture of this university... It’s a call to action for us to use our full ability and capacity to be more relevant in the community in which we reside. And it’s up to everyone at the university to think that through and then do something about it.”

- Internal
Excitement and enthusiasm surround ASU’s plans – tempered by skepticism and fear of its power in decisions about the development of greater Phoenix. Though ASU had not previously been viewed as a dominant force in the Phoenix community, under its current leadership, the university has become – depending on one’s perspective – either a “player,” a voice to contend with, or an integral part of the social fabric and economic well-being of the Phoenix metropolitan region. There is a general understanding that ASU is seeking to expand its role in the region and to become part of the public and private dialogue on issues confronting the Valley. Most believe the University has an important role to play; some question its motives. That ASU is tied to the future of greater Phoenix is undeniable. Some feel ASU might even be able to do the heretofore impossible – bring together the many fragmented communities and municipalities that have emerged in the Valley over the years. There is widespread recognition of the impressive recent success and visibility in developing private funding sources for the University, and for what is seen as the creation of high level partnerships and respect for the university within new circles of influence.

But amid the support for the entrepreneurial spirit and achievements in fundraising, there is also criticism that ASU is putting too much emphasis on a “corporate business-model” and cares more about hobnobbing with wealthy Arizonans and out-of-towners than in understanding the issues facing local residents and those who struggle to develop the region in ways that will ensure a future for the people whose voices don’t typically get heard in public arenas.

Thus, skepticism remains about the direction, true purpose, and intentions of this rapidly growing institution called ASU. For some in the community, ASU’s quest to become a world-class research institution, significantly increasing the quality of its academic programs, appears to some to conflict with its expressed and historic commitment to educate the broad diversity of Arizona’s youth despite prior academic preparation, racial/ethnic background, or socioeconomic status. And for some faculty, it is difficult to understanding how a university’s relationship with its communities impacts or boosts the potential to be a world-class university.

― Internal

**Community Perspectives – in and around the Valley of the Sun**

12 As part of one aspect of its work with ASU (from 2004 through 2006), Fern Tiger Associates sought out the diverse perspectives of more than 200 individuals from ASU and the greater Phoenix community. FTA assessed community perceptions and tested assumptions through in-person, on-site interviews, with a broad range of people, including ASU administrators, faculty, and staff; community residents and activists; directors and board members of nonprofit institutions ranging from local neighborhood and community groups to statewide organizations; civic and business leaders; urban planners and architects; public and private funders; policy makers; and elected officials and legislators. This section of the report provides an overview of the community and university voices encompassed in those interviews. (See appendix for demographic breakdown of interviewees.)
While many praise the enhanced focus on excellence, others question whether resources will be available to accomplish the bold agenda. And finally, there is criticism that many good things that existed at ASU before 2002 were ignored in favor of “new ideas” and bold initiatives that brought attention to the university, though not necessarily depth. Both inside and outside ASU there is a sense that an early “listening tour” might have helped merge the “old” with the “new”, and spread goodwill. It appears to some that the promotion of the new vision and reforms were pre-ordained without understanding the culture of either ASU or of Phoenix – without being “embedded” in the area.

Despite general enthusiasm for the overall concepts for the University’s future, the perception has been that the vision was created by a single individual, lacking genuine depth of support from stakeholders in either the university or the community, making the goals of success and sustainability elusive to many. There are pockets of genuine excitement – especially in the seats of power – about the concepts being proposed, but many faculty and community leaders are baffled by how to participate in the vision. At the onset of FTA’s interview phase of work (2004-2005), there was expressed concern that the University’s leadership might change suddenly, such that the vision may not last, creating some reluctance to become immersed or dedicated to it. Over the course of the interview period, that perception dissipated.

Both on campus and in the community, there is a perception that ASU has done an impressive job recruiting new, top level academic and administrative talent, but critics focus on the lack of commitment to “promoting from within.” This opinion fosters the notion that those with long histories (and perhaps with connections to the community that could have been helpful in building meaningful relationships with the Phoenix region) have not been supported.

ASU is praised by many who are committed to turning downtown Phoenix into an exciting and viable residential, business, and cultural center. This includes faculty and administration at the university, elected officials, and some community leaders. But others are wary of ASU’s intentions or the unintended results of development on the residents and businesses located in close proximity to the new downtown campus. While viewed as a crucial part of the University’s strategy to impact the urban vitality of the city, there is vocal concern as to whether all community views are being ‘heard’ in the process and whether ASU has any real interest in the needs and desires of pre-existing communities who fear gentrification and displacement as a result of its new and powerful neighbor. The development of a downtown campus is of great significance to both the university’s capacity to grow and also to the city’s vision of itself. It is also of interest to other universities across the country.

While diverse definitions and explanations of “social embeddedness” abound on campus, the community is actually more unified in its ability to differentiate between “doing for” or “to the community” versus “doing with the community” or “being of the community.” External stakeholders can articulate community-driven goals for a “social embeddedness” initiative. A small number question whether the university has meaningful experience to offer or wonder what “strings” would be...
attached to working together. There is also criticism that the University (especially the leadership) has not taken the appropriate “pulse” of the community – to ensure that its efforts are in synch with the community needs and desires.

In spite of the mixed perceptions, the overriding sentiment is that greater Phoenix is at a crossroad. How it takes advantage of the current, somewhat precarious confluence of politics, growth, commitment, and the sense that “the heavens are aligned” will have decisive implications for ASU and for the city of Phoenix.
Opportunities and Challenges

Over the course of its history, ASU has educated hundreds of thousands of students from the state of Arizona, as well as from the other 49 states and scores of foreign countries; provided employment and economic opportunities to many thousands more; and hosted significant social and cultural activities for students and community alike. For the most part, ASU has been a “good citizen” of greater Phoenix and has enjoyed positive support from business and civic leaders, elected officials, and the communities that comprise “the Valley.”

Since the arrival of President Michael Crow in 2002, private donors (especially those from the local region) have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars in support of academic programs, as well as specialized centers and projects, such as Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family, the Global Institute of Sustainability, and the University-Schools Partnership program.

In August 2006, ASU opened its new downtown Phoenix campus to great fanfare. It is hoped and expected that the downtown campus and continued development at all four campuses, along with the myriad new centers will add to the sense of a region thriving and teeming with the energy of students and residents, learning and creating together.

As both ASU and greater Phoenix lie on the cusp of continued growth and expansion, both players – the “New American University” and the “New American City” – have a tremendous opportunity to mutually and positively influence the development of the other. Despite the sense that the University’s true motives and methods are hidden and difficult to grasp, there is an overarching platform of political will and commitment to link the skills, knowledge, and resources of ASU with the skills, knowledge, resources, and experiences of the people of the Phoenix metropolitan region. If the vision and dreams for social embeddedness are to be successful, the moment to push forward is now.

There are a number of opportunities unique to ASU and the greater Phoenix region which may enhance the ability to integrate the University and the community:

- The relative youth of the region, with fewer entrenched traditions. (Open to new ideas, anxious to make lasting, positive impacts.)
- Retirees and entrepreneurs with new wealth, looking for innovative ways to invest in both for-profit and philanthropic ventures.
- Relative youth of the University. (Fewer “sacred cows” than at many other academic institutions.)
- New deans, faculty, and staff who support and are energized by ASU’s vision, and who are committed to a comprehensive vision for ASU’s future and the role that social embeddedness plays in this vision.
- University expansion.

“ASU’s new infrastructure of connectedness and connectivity is more important today than it’s ever been for the University... ASU can’t pull the train by itself. It is too aggressive for ASU to pull by itself. And so ASU’s got this window here, and a very important window.”

- External
Creating the New American University at ASU

ASU’s history as a teachers college, as well as its unique viewpoint and mission. ASU’s College of Education graduates comprise the majority of teachers who serve the region, giving the College – and the University – a strong dedication to the educational outcomes and economic opportunities of local residents.

Excitement generated by the new Downtown campus, and proposed expansion of the Polytechnic and West campuses, create a sense of energy and possibility among students, faculty, residents, and other community members.

Communities in greater Phoenix are aware of the potential for positive change in the region; they are eager to move forward to seize these opportunities.

The scale of the institution and the untapped resources, including students, can bring an unprecedented amount of energy to the concept of social embeddedness.

But, there are also a number of challenges and/or potential pitfalls, including:

The perception that the University has moved forward more quickly on other design imperatives creates the sense that this one may not be held in high regard.

Ongoing community skepticism that the process of social embeddedness is built on motives driven by the University’s needs and not truly meant to include the community.

Resistance of faculty who are notoriously opposed to change (especially on issues related to promotion and tenure) making systemic change difficult.

The diverse strengths and levels of interest/support among different university units could marginalize social embeddedness to particular departments, schools, and colleges whose foci are historically rooted in community and public issues and who may already be working with community, thereby avoiding real change.

The scale of the institution – which is also noted as an opportunity – makes change difficult and time consuming to implement.

Some faculty and staff have done community work for years; they may feel resentful that their work has gone unrecognized and they could become vocal detractors of a “new” social embeddedness vision or ethos, unless they understand how it is different from, and perhaps more substantive than, what they are already doing, and how their work can be transformed to meet the goals of the new vision.

Need for funding, particularly on an ongoing, sustainable basis.

Possibility that ASU or the Phoenix metropolitan area will lack public and political will to accomplish tough tasks to achieve the vision of social embeddedness.

Difficulty of communicating to a broad range of audiences, especially explaining the difference between social embeddedness and other kinds of community engagement and service.

“This is not a place that has layers and layers of wealth that are loyal to Phoenix. We do not have the philanthropic base that cities a quarter this big have.”

- External
• Community demand could exceed the university’s resources or its capacity to work with the community on its needs.

• ASU may be tested to show its commitment to operate as a truly embedded university; in particular, valuing community input when making key decisions involving campus development and other regional business and real estate investments.

• A partial commitment – evidenced by piecemeal-type implementation of the plan – will make social embeddedness at ASU similar to what other universities have done, instead of creating the unique and comprehensive effort promoted over the last several years.

By striving to transform the University through an ambitious vision of social embeddedness, ASU will move toward a true university/community partnership, which will permeate every aspect of ASU and the community. This process of transformation will demand that ASU look deeply and critically at many established ways of thinking about and operating as a university. The very attitudes and beliefs of administrators, students, faculty, and staff – from what are appropriate subjects for study; to what it takes to achieve tenure; to how to make real estate and development decisions; to how to work with communities; to how to promote the work of the institution; to how to address challenges – all of these, will be subjected to a profound metamorphosis. At the same time, communities will be pushed, and even provoked, into perceiving and working with the University in an entirely new manner. Community members will be asked to think deeply about their needs and priorities, and then work together in a committed, ongoing fashion with University members – which may be exciting, but also frustrating (as any true partnership may be).

In the future, University and community members will no longer be able to point a finger to an “us” or a “them” when assigning blame for a problem or taking credit for a job well-done. Instead, it will be a “we” of community and University individuals and institutions working together to make the greater Phoenix region a thriving home for all.

There are indeed other, easier ways for a university to thrive within the context of a community, but by embracing this plan, ASU will show its determination to take the “hard road” towards its own ideal of a socially embedded institution of higher education and a transformative community resource. It is hoped that this path will allow the University and the community to be changed qualitatively in ways that create both a truly thriving and successful New American University and New American City.

“The way I define social embeddedness is that we become an anchor of the community that allows all the good things that the community wants to do, to be aided and enhanced by our presence... I don’t believe we can solve the community’s problems. First, we’re not smart enough; second, it’s not in our mission statement; third, no university ever has.

- Internal
“It’s a two-way street...
I wish I knew how to
embed, how we could
make ASU part
of our world and
how we make our
world part of ASU.”

- External
At the request of ASU President Michael Crow, in April 2004 Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) – a strategic communications firm with deep roots in the nonprofit and public sectors, and with extensive experience working with communities in diverse parts of the U.S. on issues related to increasing civic engagement and making public policy accessible – engaged in a four month project (through July 2004) to advise Arizona State University on its readiness and steps necessary to begin the daunting task of defining and designing a plan to enable it to fulfill one of the President’s eight design imperatives: to be socially embedded in the communities of Arizona. During these initial months, the firm conducted about 40 one-on-one interviews with key internal and external stakeholders, including some community leaders. Additionally, a cursory study was done to determine what the literature said about this topic, and in a report presented in August 2004, several process options were described, along with three potential working definitions of the term, “social embeddedness.” A four-person committee, including the President, Rob Melnick, Kimberly Loui, and Jim O’Brien, reviewed the results of this work.

In September 2004, ASU issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a firm to take on the tasks necessary to develop a plan to move the social embeddedness mandate into practice. FTA’s August 2004 report showed that there were vast discrepancies between “what is” and “what might be” with regard to relations with the community and that there was little understanding (and some resistance and skepticism) as to how the university might unleash its vast resources – especially its knowledge and skills – to support community concerns. There was also little acknowledgement of the skills and experiences that communities could bring to the table. Many in the community were skeptical of the University given its scale, its power, and its growing influence in the region, which they saw as a threat. FTA responded to the RFP, and in September 2004 began a two-year process leading to the development of this plan for social embeddedness, as core to the creation of the New American University at ASU.

From September 2004 through November 2005, one-on-one, in-person interviews were conducted with more than 200 internal and external stakeholders (see appendix for demographic distribution of interviewees), including faculty, administration, and staff at ASU, community leaders, nonprofit executive directors, funders, elected officials (state, county, city), business, civic, and ethnic leaders, and others. Most interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, with some taking as long as three hours. Nearly all interviews were taped and transcribed. The format for the interviews was informal, at the homes or offices of the interviewee, with a few taking place at restaurants or public places. All interviewees were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Thus, ASU has not seen a comprehensive list of those who shared their views with Fern Tiger Associates. Four different staff at FTA conducted the interviews, with the large majority being conducted by Fern Tiger and Jennifer Foster (senior associate). Interviews were conducted in English, although a few were conducted in Spanish at the request of the interviewee.
While some questions were consistent, interview to interview, the majority of questions and the discussions that ensued were focused on the particular vantage of the interviewee. All interviewees were asked to recommend other potential names for additional interviews, and a large number of the people interviewed came through that process. Every effort was made to interview both internal and external stakeholders from each of the four campuses of the University; a large number of external stakeholders lived and/or worked in the city of Phoenix. These interviewees formed a significant part of the qualitative analysis presented to the University in January 2005, July 2005, and January 2006. Information gleaned during this process was also helpful in developing innovative strategies to set ASU apart as it defines its role in greater Phoenix.

In 2004 and 2005, staff at Fern Tiger Associates visited all ASU campuses; observed numerous presentations made by ASU administration about its plans for expansion, especially its development of the downtown campus; and followed press and media related to both the University’s activities and also political, social, and community issues. Discussions were also held with local funders and large nonprofits, including United Way, to understand what information existed with regard to asset mapping or other data regarding existing community structures and programs.

As part of the scope of work, FTA researched best practices of university/community engagement at 170 universities and colleges nationwide. This first tier of university research assessed common themes, promising practices, and challenges. The second tier of research focused on 55 universities and colleges that appeared (through web searches, Lexus Nexis, and phone interviews with faculty and community leaders) to have more extensive interest in topics similar to what was being defined as “social embeddedness.” Eventually the list was narrowed to 25 colleges and universities – all located in large metropolitan areas, most publicly funded, most large research universities. Fifteen of these 25 universities were visited over a period of three months in the spring of 2005. (See footnote, page 14, for list of universities visited.)

All university visits and interviews were conducted by Fern Tiger. Visits included interviews with between two and 12 representatives of the university and community of each institution. In general, the names of potential interviewees at each campus and community were determined by FTA – in an effort to bypass the more “official and promotional view” that would be presented if left to the universities themselves. A thorough review of each university's website, press, promotional materials, and other documents preceded each campus visit, as well as preliminary phone meetings with each potential interviewee to assess their role within the community and campus structure. Wherever possible, meetings were set with provosts, vice presidents, individual faculty, center directors, and others integrally related to the systems in place at the institution to support engagement. Every effort was also made to meet with the people who conceived the university’s engagement program to understand both the history and the activities that were developed to move the agenda forward.

“Social embeddedness means fulfilling the social obligation that comes from the investment society makes in the educational mission of the state. It’s being part of the social fabric.”

- External
From July to September 2005, Fern Tiger Associates presented the findings from both the stakeholder interviews and the national research to the President and the four-person committee; to University Council; and to the newly created Social Embeddedness Steering Committee (comprised of 35 university leaders representing all four campuses, students, staff, faculty, and administration). A small sub-group of this committee was formed, following the Steering Committee’s first meeting where the Committee’s responsibilities were defined by the President (see Appendix). The sub-group, dubbed “G-9” (acknowledging both the number of members and the months of work) met monthly with Fern Tiger to craft the definition of social embeddedness, and the vision and values the University needed to embrace to move forward.

At the onset, the G-9 focused on the initial concept presented in the July report looking at social embeddedness as a three-legged stool (teaching and learning; economic investment and development; and community capacity building; with research and evaluation as a connector for the model). The group quickly expanded the components to include social development and research as equal elements of the model – creating the five-pronged definition included in the plan presented here.

Between October 2005 and February 2006, the concepts related to the definition and vision were presented to the Academic Chairs and Department Heads Council and others, and was added to ASU’s website.

The group presented its work to the larger committee in February 2006 and in May 2006 led a discussion related to the draft goals and recommendations. The committee focused on what they thought ASU and the community would look like if the University was truly “embedded.” Key to the discussion were issues related to sustainability, leadership, and the means to develop a university-wide ethos that would move ASU to a new standard internally and to become a model for public and research universities, nationally. Central to these dialogues was the difference between engagement through a collection of dispersed programs and projects (which the committee felt, currently, best characterized ASU and most other universities) versus a clearly defined and embraced university-wide ethos and strong philosophical roots which thread through all decisionmaking from teaching and learning to economic investment. The ideas of both the G-9 and the Steering Committee are incorporated into this document and form the basis for the recommendations.14 The G-9 and the President will review the plan and discuss implementation at meetings scheduled for October 2006.

“ASU needs to become a contributor to the dialogue about the future of our city. That means professors get actively engaged in crafting solutions to our urban problems... If ASU is successful at social embeddedness then one of the ways of measuring it will be whether the intellectual contributions of the university become important in the decisionmaking process.”

- External

13 The G-9 group included Rob Melnick, Debra Friedman, Gene Garcia, David Schwalm, Colleen Jennings-Rogensack, Barry Ritchie, Kimberly Loui, and Fern Tiger. Meetings were facilitated and documented by Fern Tiger Associates. (See Appendix for composition of full Steering Committee.)

14 In June 2006, Fern Tiger Associates was asked to prepare a set of implementation options related to staffing, budget, and the launch of the socially embedded university. This was submitted in July 2006.
The goals in this plan embrace a vision of a state where communities work together to cultivate their combined creativity, knowledge, experience, and resources to enhance, promote, and support the well-being of its people.
This plan, including the definition, goals, and strategies that follow, represents a “first draft” of the University’s vision of social embeddedness and its role in the greater Phoenix community. While influenced by community views (gathered through extensive interviews over the course of one year) and needs, the plan has been neither reviewed nor endorsed by the community; it represents an initial attempt to define a set of goals and actions which could be taken to better integrate the University with the surrounding community. It will be critical for the community to share in the process of defining the ultimate vision, goals, and actions of the final “working plan.” Similarly the process of developing this plan (see Methodology) – because of its focus on long term institutional change – has yet to engage students in any meaningful way. But, as the recommendations indicate, broad dissemination and discussions – with community leaders and residents, and with students, as well as a broad cross section of ASU faculty and staff – leading to the working plan should prove rewarding and will be critical to actualizing the plan.

ASU’s Definition of Social Embeddedness

Social Embeddedness is core to the development of ASU as the New American University. It is a university-wide, interactive, and mutually-supportive partnership with the communities of Arizona. At ASU, social embeddedness involves the ongoing integration of five innovative and distinct, yet interrelated, actions:

- **Teaching and Learning** - involving faculty and students in solving problems facing communities.
- **Research and Discovery** - advancing relevant inquiry by valuing community input, knowledge, and needs.
- **Community Capacity Building** - enabling community-based organizations and institutions to become strong and effective by providing support, training, and access to resources and information.
- **Economic Development and Investment** - responding to the needs of the university and the needs of communities as ASU pursues its role as an economic engine.
- **Social Development** - enhancing the well-being of the diverse people and communities of Arizona, by working closely with public and private institutions.

15 See Footnote 4; page 7.
ASU’s Five Strategies

As noted earlier, Arizona State University has defined “embeddedness” as a five part strategy including community capacity building; curricular change based on academic commitment to local social issues and problem solving (teaching and learning); academic research and discovery to benefit regional and national communities; community-focused economic development and investment; and a transformation of social development and economic well being of the region.

• Building the capacity of communities requires sustained engagement efforts – informed and reinforced by trust and true two-way communication between and among the university and the community. Most important, for communities and community-based organizations to mature, and become capable and effective enough to be real partners with long-standing institutions like universities, they need support, training, and access to resources and information that can enable them to become more sophisticated and self-sufficient.

• Teaching and learning are at the heart of every university’s mission. The institution’s core values are evidenced in faculty hiring criteria, tenure requirements, and the nature of coursework offered to students. Curriculum that reflects an institutional commitment to civic values and social responsibility; that prepares students to be valued members, and indeed the backbone, of a civil society; and that sustains the involvement of faculty and students in problem-solving for core issues facing communities, form the internal manifestations of a university’s sustained commitment to meaningful engagement. Often, these efforts entail a major cultural shift within the university. If today’s college graduates are to be positive influences and constructive actors locally, nationally, and globally, they need to be more than just “educated.” They need to realize that they are members of a community – often the privileged members – obligated to participate in, and contribute to, civic life. Perhaps most important, they should be able to understand and work effectively for the common good of the community.

• Research and discovery are the lifeblood of academic institutions. Pure research in the hard sciences and in social sciences serves to advance the knowledge that drives human civilization. This type of research has historically shaped universities, determining faculty hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions. Yet often, this pure research becomes disassociated from the human needs that ought to drive it and becomes an end in itself. The research agenda at the New American University should be connected to community needs and, in fact, often be inspired by the community. Research, by nature, addresses complex issues which should then translate to an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach to developing hypotheses and seeking solutions. Research and discovery should serve as connecting threads across the colleges and departments of the university and throughout the community.
• For large urban universities, *economic development and investment in local communities* have become “givens” – be it the purchase and development of property, or the recognition that the institution is a major local employer. The question becomes whether a university is prepared to be transparent in the evaluation of its decisions and hold itself to the standards communities deserve. Universities need to ask whether their plans respond both to the needs of the institution and to the needs of the community, and whether these efforts meet the goals of social embeddedness. When representatives of the community are included early – in both program planning and oversight – and when the university treats communities and community organizations as true partners that add value to the university's mission, projects are more likely to be embraced by both sides.

• Evidence of *social development and well-being* is found in many forms in communities – from the health of its residents; to the vibrancy of its culture as evidenced by a free and generous flow of ideas, to the thoughtfulness of leaders and residents in planning and development, to the formation and growth of social capital. As a community institution, and as an academic and financial powerhouse, the university plays a significant role in the social development of a community, just by virtue of being there. At the institutional level, however, the university can and should take responsibility for broad systems changes by using its many resources to form relationships with communities, to understand their needs, to put the institution's wealth of expertise to work to seek answers to problems, and to contribute its financial resources to implement solutions.

Missing one component, the university is unlikely to topple, but the commitment to community engagement will, in all likelihood, be flawed and transitory.
Goals

The vision and actions needed to transform Arizona State University, while building and sustaining the values of social embeddedness, encompass four main goals. Two of the goals relate directly to the University; two goals relate more broadly to the community. The five integrated actions included in the definition are woven thematically into four goals:

1) Foster a university-wide culture that embraces responsibility for contributing to positive social change in the community and in the research, teaching, and service practices of ASU.

2) Develop internal and external structures and reward systems to encourage and support effective implementation and long-term sustainability of social embeddedness as a core value for ASU and the greater Phoenix community.

3) Work in partnership with the communities of Arizona to increase the state’s social capital and to strengthen the capacity of communities.

4) Establish ASU as a national model for university-community partnership.

The following pages describe in detail the goals, strategies, and recommended actions that ASU should take to move towards the accomplishment of a coherent vision of a university which is socially embedded within its regional community. A separate section, Management Strategies, provides additional insight into how the plan and the goals can be supported and implemented.

For the sake of logic and organization, some strategies and actions may appear at a later point in the document, but that is no indication of their relative level of importance. To highlight key strategies and actions, each section begins with a brief overview of critical activities related to that particular goal.16

16 Note some recommendations repeat because they are relevant to more than one goal.
Goal One: University-wide Culture
Core Strategies and Actions

- **Refine University mission statement and strategic plan** to reflect social embeddedness as a core institutional goal.

- **Actualize the definition** of social embeddedness to clarify what makes an activity, program, project, or decision socially embedded.

- **Build departmental and faculty understanding of, and support for, the vision and definition of social embeddedness.**

- **Appoint a curriculum task force** to consider a university-wide capstone requirement that meets social embeddedness definitions and includes coursework, original research, and community empowerment.

- **Create a community-based forum** to engage students, faculty, staff, local residents, and community leaders in ongoing dialogues on topics relevant to both the University and the community.

- **Initiate publication of journal-style case studies** to document ASU’s experiences and to highlight and showcase exemplary efforts of university-community partnerships that meet the social embeddedness definition.

- **Integrate community knowledge into university-driven and university-wide research** and use research to advance community goals.

- **Develop university policies and accountability procedures** that stress social embeddedness in all operational aspects of ASU.

- **Hire “Director of Social Embeddedness”**¹⁷ to ensure a consistent university-wide vision, strategy, and direction for social embeddedness within academic and administrative programs and activities.

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¹⁷ The exact title of the position will be determined by the President. Based on research and best practices, it appears to be important for the person overseeing social embeddedness to play a hands-on role, yet still have a high level title (Vice President in some universities, Director in others) which is understood to have the clout necessary to take action, to make decisions quickly, and to have access to the highest levels of authority at the institution. The title should be one that garners respect university-wide and in the community. Throughout this report, the term “Director” is in quotation marks to indicate that this is a “working title.”
Commentary

Arizona State University has a myriad of ambitious programs and activities throughout the institution which connect with and involve the regional community – from volunteer activities and service learning programs, to community clinics, to partnerships with local high schools and hospitals, to sporting and cultural events. Some might argue that, in light of these programs, ASU is already “socially embedded” in the communities of greater Phoenix. However, like at other institutions across the country, these individual activities lack a number of critical elements contained in the definition and intent of “social embeddedness” and do not come together as a cohesive “whole.”

Though ASU states its commitment to social embeddedness at the highest levels of the University, neither its mission statement nor its strategic plan reflect a dedication to community empowerment or to civic engagement that brings community voice to major regional and University decisions. This reality filters into attitudes held by faculty and staff throughout the University. The lack of a comprehensive vision that integrates the community with the University has been apparent historically in examples as varied as promotional materials and websites, student recruitment and admission decisions, research agendas, program funding, tenure decisions, business investments, and campus development and growth.

Over the course of ASU’s history, the University has provided the communities of greater Phoenix with substantial resources including expertise and research through programs and centers (e.g. Morrison Institute, community health clinics, partnerships with local public schools). In recent years, ASU has deepened its commitment to community issues through the launch of innovative new centers and initiatives such as the Institute for Sustainability, Phoenix Urban Research Laboratory, Indian Legal Program, the Decision Theater, University-School Partnerships, Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family, and Academic Nursing Centers. While the work of these centers is valid, useful, and laudable, the creation of specialized units, tacitly or explicitly relegates community-focused work to individual faculty or academic “silos,” rather than being at the core of the University’s mission. In many cases, the work of these centers is not threaded into curriculum, especially at the undergraduate level. Nor do these units necessarily influence the research of the broader University population. More importantly, this work is often perceived as not being accessible to community members who might benefit from it.

There has been relatively little planned coherence or strategy to existing community involvement efforts, and in many cases, ASU has not worked in mutual partnership with the communities in which it operates. As at most universities, ASU students, faculty, and staff knowingly or unknowingly adopt a traditional, much-rewarded service mentality (“give to” or “do for”) rather than an approach of empowering communities (“do with” or “be of”).
In developing a “community-based” student service project or faculty research agenda, faculty and students generally consider their own academic and pedagogical needs first. They do not always consult community leaders or residents about community needs and priorities; nor do students and faculty consider how the student services or research project results will impact important community issues. When executing their projects, students and faculty do not necessarily strive to engage communities in what they are doing and why.

Like all academic institutions, ASU often collects reams of data from the community, publishing lengthy reports and papers, which might be shared with prestigious academic journals. These documents are not regularly disseminated to the community in which the study took place, nor written in formats useful to communities. Due to the academic calendar and vagaries of program funding, university-sponsored community projects can be halted suddenly; projects come and go as faculty and faculty priorities change; and university schedules (with long summer vacations) interfere with the ongoing activities and life of a community. For communities, their issues are ongoing; often for universities, the focus of community issues are intermittent (not necessarily by choice, but by circumstance). Additionally, communities need information quickly – to make decisions, to apply for grant funding, to consider next steps; academics are accustomed to time-consuming research and analysis and exacting information. Sometimes these two different worlds and approaches just cannot understand one another. Instead of building knowledge and skills to empower the community, universities often confuse “charity” and “service” for “engagement with community” and are perceived by communities as treating them as living laboratories.

Over the course of two years, and more than 200 one-on-one interviews with internal and external stakeholders, Fern Tiger Associates found that most faculty are quick to note that while they believe the premise of an “embedded” university is intriguing and something they would like to rally around, they either think they are already doing work that supports “the greater good” (which they equate with social embeddedness) or they do not see how social embeddedness fits into a rigorous academic research agenda. Some do not understand how their teaching and research can (or should) connect to communities. Some believe that the university should be dedicated to “pure study” and the creation of knowledge. Still others are skeptical about the intent of social embeddedness, believing that it is just a “hot topic” which will fade as soon as the commitment and attention of key leaders fade.

Some University administrators see a viable role for individual colleges – or individual faculty – to be “socially embedded” but cannot imagine how the university as a whole can truly fulfill this ambitious goal. Others point to the need for the university to clarify and articulate its values (social embeddedness, funded research, entrepreneurship), and let those values drive the agenda. But these views would seem to leave the community voice out of the picture.
In spite of the fact that the concept of social embeddedness has had fairly high visibility at ASU, as part of the initial set of design imperatives presented by the president in 2002 and published broadly, and through the creation of numerous high profile centers aimed at increasing ASU involvement with social issues – there does not appear to be an overarching commitment or coherent strategy to connect the individual and distinct efforts. Nor is there compelling evidence that the intent of some of these activities moves beyond “serving” to an empowering, enduring endeavor to build the capacity of the community. Additionally, it is not clear that any comprehensive effort has been made to systematically document or evaluate programs that purport to be socially embedded to determine who they have affected, if there has been an impact, whether that impact has been positive, how the results might be linked to other outcomes, and whether they have increased community capacity and sustainability. Without an ongoing, long-term evaluation, it is nearly impossible to determine whether programmatic efforts related to social embeddedness have had any consequential or lasting results.

While no single university, nationwide, appears to demonstrate a comprehensive, successful approach to social embeddedness, those universities that are perceived as having built successful partnerships (as acknowledged by peer universities and community alike) are those where the culture of the institution is based on a commitment to community engagement. In some cases, that culture stems directly from a clear, well-supported, and publicized mission statement and/or institutional motto that stresses the value of community, the importance of civic engagement, and the need to link together the innovative ideas and actions of university and community members for the betterment of the larger region. Such transformation requires a fundamental change in the culture of the institution – moving beyond traditional academics and research into an institution which values and engages in active empowerment of the community.

The recommendations that follow attempt to move ASU toward this transformation. Beyond the refinement and refocusing of ASU’s mission statement and strategic plan to set the tone and direction for all future work, setting a clear definition of social embeddedness, will be critical to the success of ASU’s efforts.

To this end, among the recommendations noted in this plan, is the development of a series of journal-style publications. The first will explore the actions that ASU has taken to become an “engaged university” and the lessons learned along the way. The publication is intended to be a highly informative, visual, “documentary-style” book-length product that will captivate university and community audiences alike. It will highlight approximately 20-25 projects, programs, and curriculum concepts that epitomize the best of ASU’s definition of social embeddedness, featuring mini case studies and stories depicting the projects – based on interviews with faculty and students involved, in addition to community organizations, constituents, and other key stakeholders for each project. Each journalistically-written case study will be enhanced by documentary photography and self-evaluations from both the university and the partner community organization. The publication itself will hold to the social embeddedness standards – accessibility and usefulness to both community and University, (with wide regional and national dissemination).
Part Two of the publication “Promising Practices: An Analysis of the New American University” will focus on innovations, best practices, new models, and transdisciplinary work developed over the subsequent two years (following more robust implementation of the social embeddedness goals, which would likely show faculty and community changes in their thinking and programming related to community partnership and sustainability).

The creation of a community forum and processes to integrate community knowledge into the University’s research agendas and other work will be critical steps in engaging the community as a true partner. Building faculty support for the vision; creating integrated academic coursework; and developing university-wide policies and procedures to guide decisionmaking to embrace the values of social embeddedness – will all serve to actualize a cultural shift throughout the institution. Finally, a new “Director of Social Embeddedness” will guide the vision, strategy, and implementation of the plan, until the plan itself is embedded within ASU and the community. Through the set of strategic, thoughtful, and coordinated actions presented on the following pages, ASU can work to change its institutional culture and mindset.

Teaching and Learning

- Actively recruit, admit, and retain students who believe in, and are committed to, the social embeddedness mission of the University.

Recommended Actions

- Use existing partnerships with greater-Phoenix area high schools to foster an understanding of the social embeddedness mission and to encourage high school graduation and university matriculation.
- Consider dedicating an admissions staffer to recruit high-caliber undergraduate students dedicated to community-related study and research.
- Offer incentives and provide coordination to ASU graduate programs to encourage recruitment of post-baccalaureate students dedicated to transdisciplinary social embeddedness study and research.
- Develop and include social embeddedness activities as part of new student orientations.
- Promote funding for a “Social Embeddedness” scholarship for undergraduates; offer a “Social Embeddedness” fellowship to graduate students.
- As part of evaluation efforts, track student retention data and determine (through surveys, focus groups, etc.) the extent to which social embeddedness programs and activities help keep students engaged at the University.

Foster a university-wide culture that embraces responsibility for contributing to positive social change in the community and in the research, teaching, and service practices of ASU.
• **Increase opportunities for student learning and community empowerment projects related to the social embeddedness vision.**

*Recommended Actions*

- Appoint a curriculum task force to consider a university-wide capstone requirement that meets social embeddedness definitions and includes coursework, original research, and community empowerment.
- Develop and maintain a shared database (accessible to ASU and the greater community) of meaningful community empowerment activities in which students can choose to participate.
- Produce a journal-style publication to document through case studies both innovations and best practices as well as the actions ASU takes to become an engaged university. *(See Commentary for more detail.)*

**Research and Discovery**

• **Build departmental and faculty understanding of, and support for, the vision and definition of social embeddedness.**

*Recommended Actions*

- Identify and cultivate “champions” of social embeddedness among faculty and staff.
- Provide ample time for promotion and discussion of social embeddedness as a core university goal at appropriate internal venues (e.g. University Council Retreat, Chairs’ Retreat, New Faculty Orientation, Deans Council, Academic Chairs and Directors Council, etc.) – with the intention of explaining college and unit level expectations.

• **Integrate community knowledge into research and use research to advance the goals of communities.**

*Recommended Actions*

- Create a community-based forum – both real and virtual (including regularly-scheduled “town hall-style” meetings and a community web log) – to engage students, faculty, staff, local residents, and community leaders in ongoing dialogues on topics relevant to both the University and the community.
- Work with community members and leaders of community organizations to identify areas of community need which could be addressed through student projects and faculty research.
- Conduct a biannual formal community needs assessment in greater Phoenix metropolitan area to determine community needs and priorities. *(See Appendix.)*
Community Capacity-Building

- Generate an understanding of social embeddedness across the University and throughout the greater Phoenix community.

Recommended Actions

- Hire a “Director” of Social Embeddedness (reporting jointly to the University Provost and President) to ensure consistent vision, strategy, and direction for social embeddedness programs and activities.
- Refine the University mission statement and strategic plan to reflect social embeddedness as an institutional goal.
  - Publicize the changes in the mission and strategic plan, following extensive community discussion and development of the joint working plan, to ensure broad understanding and acceptance.
- Actualize the definition of social embeddedness to clarify what makes an activity, program, project, or decision socially embedded as compared to “service” or “volunteerism.” (E.g. It is socially embedded if it is not one-time only; and leaves behind expertise in the community; and/or advances social development in the community; and/or advances economic development; and is evaluated for outcome and impact in the community.)
- Integrate the social embeddedness vision and definition in all ASU materials, website, publications, speeches, and presentations in a consistent manner.
- Ensure that the social embeddedness vision and information is highly visible and easily accessible from the ASU website homepage.

Economic Development and Investment

- Develop university policies and accountability procedures that stress social embeddedness in all operational aspects of ASU.

Recommended Actions

- Develop a policy handbook which provides university staff with suggestions and direction to guide decisionmaking (e.g. for investments, development, contracting with vendors, etc.).
- Hold an annual seminar for key university staff (e.g. fund development, campus operations, real estate, etc.) to create a dialogue about appropriate decision-making processes and activities related to social embeddedness.
- Conduct a biannual “audit” to determine whether investments and operations meet social embeddedness criteria. (This could be modeled – to some extent – on Community Reinvestment Act audits of financial services companies.)

Foster a university-wide culture that embraces responsibility for contributing to positive social change in the community and in the research, teaching, and service practices of ASU.
Social Development and Well-Being

- Track and evaluate the effectiveness of the social embeddedness vision and programs across the university and involved communities.

Recommended Actions

- Identify and track a series of “well-being” metrics for the University and the community which could be influenced by social embeddedness programs (e.g. health indicators, graduation rates, employment rates, etc.).

- Publish and share metrics with the University and greater Phoenix community on a biannual basis through publications, websites, and presentations.
Goal #2: Structures and Reward Systems

Develop internal and external structures and reward systems to encourage and support effective implementation and long-term sustainability of social embeddedness as a core value for ASU and the greater Phoenix community.

Goal Two: Structures and Rewards
Core Strategies and Actions

• Create faculty and staff hiring policies that include social embeddedness criteria.

• Develop reward systems to acknowledge and support ASU’s commitment to social embeddedness as a scholarly endeavor.

• Define social embeddedness involvement, success, and accountability by “unit,” with regular reporting to the Provost and President on progress.

• Develop “socially embedded” teaching and research criteria which set models for tenure track standards across the university.

• Inspire and support groundbreaking course development through the funding of the Curriculum Innovation Trust.

• Seek to build and foster a new generation of community leaders in greater Phoenix who have a shared vision of social embeddedness.

• Encourage and support reciprocal relationships and involvement of individuals at ASU, and within the Phoenix community.
Commentary

Historically, educational institutions – including research universities and liberal arts colleges – have focused on their core activities of teaching, research, and service. For centuries, it has been taken as an article of faith that the purpose of undergraduate education is to teach students a generally agreed-upon curriculum of academic subjects, using traditional pedagogical methods. In research institutions, faculty and graduate students pursue the creation of knowledge through rigorous study of highly specific subject matter in order to add to a scholarly body of knowledge. Students are evaluated on a demonstration of knowledge through papers and presentations, and written and oral exams. Faculty are evaluated through observation, peer review, student commentary, and most importantly, publication of scholarly works in respected, peer-reviewed academic journals.

It is no secret that of the three foci of educational institutions – teaching, research, and public service – published research is generally paramount. The prestige of research impacts decisions ranging from hiring and promotion, to curriculum development, to tenure review, to program funding, to physical campus development. This traditional approach has profoundly impacted the structure of educational institutions, including that of ASU.

It should be a truism that when academic transformation to embrace social embeddedness is a goal, converting the faculty to the cause of community engagement becomes a primary objective. This point deserves special emphasis, however, in light of the many failures – on the part of otherwise well-conceived engagement efforts at universities across the country – to win over a critical mass of faculty before personnel changes at the top alter the institutional commitment to community partnerships or curricular change. Meanwhile, the age-old traditions of the academy continue to discourage younger faculty who would like to incorporate work with community partners into their teaching, but who also need to gain tenure and stature in their disciplines. Local tenure decisions and hiring practices are generally based on traditional benchmarks for academic accomplishment: quality of research and the ability to attract grant funding to support it; peer-reviewed scholarly publication; and (often to a lesser degree) quality of teaching.

For numerous reasons, the addition of a community engagement criterion to the promotion and tenure checklist has been an elusive goal at most, if not all, universities. Yet all agree this is key to real, cultural change at academic institutions. Tenure discussions could be accompanied by ongoing efforts to educate the faculty about recognizing and responding to the true needs of the community through their disciplines – moving beyond research that quantifies or elaborates on a local problem without incorporating community inquiry into potential solutions to research that addresses real and pressing needs and that involves community understanding of the significance of, and participation in the design of, the research.

Develop internal and external structures and reward systems to encourage and support effective implementation and long-term sustainability of social embeddedness as a core value for ASU and the greater Phoenix community.
Community engagement initiatives across the country are variously led and supported from a university’s central administration (the president’s or chancellor’s office), from the office of the Provost, from a research center within a college or school, or from a free-standing center or institute housed within the university. The locus of the effort appears to be consequential for credibility, sustainability, funding, and for gaining faculty support.

The idea of social embeddedness at ASU has, to date, been driven from the top, leading some to see it as a superficial overlay on work already being done or simply as a way to build community support for ASU.

From the research and interviews, it was apparent that faculty and administration worry about the capacity to sustain community-based work, especially if it is not supported with a long term commitment of resources. Few believe their teaching or research falls within the university’s new definition of social embeddedness. There is consensus that to move this agenda forward, leadership needs to come from the President – who many believe holds the definitions and criteria for what is and is not socially embedded, regardless of the faculty’s own definitions. Deans and faculty hope to get beyond the “big picture” and are anxious for assistance to understand how their work can support ASU’s agenda of social embeddedness – although much attention seems focused on “quick wins” and examples of “how pre-existing programs can be redefined to fit the new vision.”

While it is critical that the vision for social embeddedness becomes a university-wide ethos, it is important to note that this does not mean that all faculty will necessarily develop new curriculum or redefine their research agendas. Rather, this plan proposes that each individual unit will determine how it will interpret and meet the social embeddedness agenda. Each unit will be responsible for supporting and advancing the work of social embeddedness, holding it in the highest regard. It will be the responsibility of the President and Provost to set standards and to determine the success of the effort to transform the university as a whole. Faculty members who undertake work related to the goals and vision of social embeddedness should be honored with appropriate awards and public recognition.

It is important to note the crucial distinction between truly engaged coursework planned jointly by the community and the faculty member, and faculty-driven research agendas developed before the community is invited to participate. Similarly, universities often sponsor volunteer activities which, while providing free labor, do not foster long-term relationships with communities and continue the charity model (“serving”), rather than the capacity-building model (“empowering”). These efforts sometimes create tension between communities desiring to learn and to build sustainability and skills, academics who want data, and universities who want to “do good.”
Teaching and Learning

- Create a tradition of curriculum and teaching methods that consider community needs and make ASU a leader in social learning and responsibility.

Recommended Actions

- Define social embeddedness involvement, success, and accountability by “unit,” with regular reporting to the Provost and President on progress.
- Provide support and resources to colleges to encourage a social embeddedness agenda, including curriculum transformation, as appropriate for each unit.
- Inspire and support groundbreaking course development through the funding of the Curriculum Innovation Trust. (See Appendix.)
- Appoint a review team to assess programs and curriculum within units and to provide guidance to best meet criteria of social embeddedness.
- Create hiring policies that include social embeddedness criteria.
- Emphasize the social embeddedness vision and activities at orientations for new staff and faculty.
  - Develop and disseminate materials, talking points, and PowerPoint presentation for use by units to best explain social embeddedness.

Research and Discovery

- Support individual units in their review of academic performance standards and reward structures to incorporate social embeddedness as an element, in the context of the research and teaching missions of the University and in the work of the unit.

Recommended Actions

- Encourage directors to meet individually with their units on an annual basis to review and discuss all activities related to academic performance, research agendas, and faculty promotion and tenure decisions in light of the vision for social embeddedness.
- Create a network of research universities committed to social and economic investment in communities – values that are encompassed in the definition of both social embeddedness and the New American University.
  - Formulate and disseminate best practices, intersectoral partnerships, and impact models.
  - Develop a regularly published journal to help develop common lexicons, to assess lessons learned, and to promote a vision for social embeddedness work at research universities that can begin to build and sustain a movement for transformative thinking, leading to social change.
• Develop reward systems to acknowledge and support ASU’s commitment to social embeddedness as a scholarly endeavor.

**Recommended Actions**

• Identify funding to: institutionalize dedicated stipends, one-time and/or permanent salary increases; cover travel expenses to visit exemplar programs in other communities; provide sabbatical program to plan curriculum; create a Regents Professorship tied to social embeddedness; etc.

• Provide focused attention on social embeddedness research in publications, public presentations, and through other public venues.

• Encourage research that will further the development of a socially-embedded university and to provide useful knowledge to support community needs and to address community problems.

• Review the potential to waive or reduce University “overhead fees” for research focused on local community issues and needs in the greater Phoenix area.

• Develop a strategy and identify faculty to spearhead a national campaign to begin changing publication standards and requirements at academic journals to emphasize and encourage community-related research articles.

• Develop criteria for “socially embedded” teaching and research criteria which meet tenure track standards across the university.

**Community Capacity-Building**

• Seek to build and foster a new generation of community leaders in greater Phoenix who have a shared vision of social embeddedness.

**Recommended Actions**

• Design and implement a coordinated strategy to identify and develop community leadership across the University.

• Engage the President’s Community and Minority Councils in ongoing dialogue about the vision and goals of social embeddedness at ASU and in the greater Phoenix community; seek to build an understanding of, and support for, the vision among these key community leaders.

• Consider funding a university-wide “Community Leaders Fellowship” (in place of, or in addition to, existing programs housed within specific centers). Year-long fellowships could include opportunities to study or to participate in specially designed symposia, research, etc. as well as support for much needed research and investigation by non-traditional “researchers,” e.g. community leaders, nonprofit executive directors, business leaders, etc.

• Convene an annual “Community Leaders Summit” to bring together community leaders participating in diverse ASU programs at the unit level to focus on critical community issues and to expand the social embeddedness dialogue, locally, regionally, and nationally.
Economic Development and Investment

• Focus resources to impact the positive growth and development of local communities.

Recommended Actions

• Seek to build and maintain sustainable sources of funding to support ongoing activities related to social embeddedness.

• Foster relationships with key economic and political decisionmakers in greater Phoenix and enlist their ongoing support for the vision and goals of social embeddedness.

Social Development and Well-Being

• Encourage and support reciprocal relationships and involvement of individuals at ASU and within the Phoenix community.

Recommended Actions

• Encourage ASU faculty, staff, and students to participate on local and regional nonprofit and city/county boards, commissions, committees, task forces, etc.

  • Promote participation as an “ASU value,” and consider offering time off, modest reimbursements, etc. to support participation that meets ASU’s definition of social embeddedness.
Goal Three: Partnerships
Overview of Strategies and Actions

• Ensure that the vision and goals of the community are understood and respected at all levels of the University, and are universally incorporated into the teaching, learning and research at ASU.

• Create an environment for discussion about the appropriate role for the University in the communities of Arizona.

• Conduct meaningful, relevant community research and share results broadly with the communities of Arizona in an ongoing and consistent fashion.

• Develop a “community clearinghouse” at a high level within the University to handle community requests; to share resources; and to direct community inquiries.

• Structure ASU’s economic investments to set a new standard for community partnership and university/community dialogue and decision-making.
Commentary

As one of only three major universities in the state of Arizona, with more than 60,000 students, approximately 11,000 faculty and staff, and a budget in excess of $1 billion, ASU has an outsized presence both in greater Phoenix and in the state of Arizona. Given its sheer size, and the intellectual and economic power that it wields, ASU has not only the opportunity, but also the responsibility to act as a catalyst to expand dialogue and bring its vast academic knowledge and financial resources to bear on the needs and challenges of the region.

While a university embarking on a new engagement initiative undoubtedly understands its own specific needs, it may not understand the needs of the community. Generally, communities do a lot of thinking about their needs, since addressing them often requires prioritization of resources that are not readily available (otherwise the needs would likely be met). In many, if not most, communities the local university is perceived as a monolithic, immovable institution that leaves its ivory tower only when it needs something from the community, such as support for large scale construction. The reputation of many – especially large – academic institutions is that they are cut off from the very people who have “real” knowledge (experience-based, “non-book” knowledge) about community. Community-based activists especially, feel that their knowledge could enrich student learning, but are rarely called on to work with the university. The gap between communities and universities perpetuates the insularity of many academics – even those who purport to be studying communities and community development – and separates communities, community-based practitioners, and organizations from the often strong and relevant research that is done by academics. In short, the two cultures do not come together very often. The primary responsibility for bridging the gap – of necessity – falls on the university, because it can more easily enter the open doors of the community, while communities have difficulty finding their way into the university.

In this environment, building trust, gaining cooperation, and working toward collaboration with neighborhood and community organizations is both critical and time-consuming.

A very different and genuine kind of engagement happens when administrators and individual faculty and staff participate in local civic life as residents of the communities of the region – living in close proximity to the university, participating on neighborhood or city commissions, and impacting policymaking as “individuals,” rather than as “representatives” of the university. Civic involvement by individuals identified with the university can help build a positive image of the institution in the community. It also models active participation in democracy for students and decreases the university’s “arrogance quotient,” mentioned frequently by community leaders who are skeptical of a university’s commitment and who question its understanding of community issues.

Work in partnership with the communities of Arizona to increase the state’s social capital and to strengthen the capacity of communities.
As ASU takes this plan to the next phase, a comprehensive process – in which the community participates as an equal partner with the university – will add both visibility and credibility at the same time that it builds in safeguards against strategic omissions. The final working plan should identify key constituencies as well as a sequence and timetable for engaging them as partners in the process: deans, professors, and students; university administrators including those with responsibility for finance and development; community partners including community-based organizations and the business community; and local government decision makers.

ASU has already taken an important step in its planning process, as reflected in this draft plan, but now it must take the next step of sharing the plan with the community, and subjecting it to the voices of suggestion, skepticism, and criticism as community residents and leaders re-work and re-shape the plan to more accurately and comprehensively reflect the needs and priorities of greater Phoenix and of the state.

The recommended public (and well-publicized) launch to engage and attract as many people as possible (including those community members not usually involved in civic processes) will create an opportunity for the University not only to share its vision for social embeddedness, but also to demonstrate what it has learned about itself and how it relates (or does not) to the surrounding community. The launch is merely a starting point – it is not the moment for the University to “tell” the community what it has planned. Rather, it is a time to share learnings and listen carefully to the inputs and comments from various community constituents. The launch is proposed to comprise an extensive series of activities – potentially including public presentations by key university and community leaders, a speaker series, round-table discussions and symposia, a door-to-door neighborhood campaign, the unveiling of a new interactive website, and the broad dissemination of publications related to social embeddedness including case studies of promising practices.

By sharing the planning process in a truly collaborative fashion with the community, ASU opens the doors of its own ivory tower, inviting the community to take an active, participatory role in shaping the institution that sits within its midst. Community members are likely to be much more receptive to new ideas, programs, and initiatives put forth by the University if they feel they have taken part in a collaborative effort to make those decisions. In turn, the University may find that community members are no longer adversarial, but have turned into neighborhood friends, colleagues, and partners.

Following the start-up, ASU will need to continue efforts to keep the lines of communication open between community and university. ASU has historically had any number of communications programs through the University’s offices of Public Affairs and University Initiatives, through its website, through the efforts of individual colleges and departments, and through stand-alone centers – each of which puts out its own brochures, flyers, newsletters, and reports (and in the case of the public relations department, frequent press releases).
The ASU website has extensive information available to the public, and the section of the website entitled *ASU in the Community* is a strong effort to collect and share the myriad activities and programs which ASU undertakes with and in the community (somewhat like community asset-based mapping, without the participation of the community in the gathering of the information). ASU in the Community is purposefully not academically focused and does not overtly solicit community information. Thus, it is easy to interpret it as a public relations vehicle. Still, it is a good start at documenting university-based activities and provides a base on which to build a more comprehensive view of social-embeddedness.

It will be critical for ASU to formulate a long-term communications strategy which targets the broad array of audiences in the Phoenix area and throughout the state (as well as nationally and internationally), providing those audiences with a clear understanding of the university’s vision and of ongoing efforts to transform ASU into a socially embedded university. The communications program should be viewed as a process to both “communicate with” and “report to” the community.

A thoughtful “branding” of the concept of social embeddedness will provide a touchstone for the vision the community and University define together and can serve as a marker linking all programs, activities, related communications materials, and other representations of social embeddedness. While many “names”\(^\text{18}\) for the social embeddedness effort have been floated throughout the planning process, ASU did not commit to any title, preferring that the naming be part of the initial implementation work. (The current thinking for a name is *ASU-Connected*.) The recommendations outline numerous other suggestions for opportunities for ASU and the community to work together on mutually beneficial goals.

**Teaching and Learning**

- **Build support throughout greater Phoenix and Arizona communities for the value of an education grounded in the local community.**

  **Recommended Actions**

  - Build and maintain strong relationships and programs with the community college system to allow community members another avenue of access to ASU.
  - Expand and re-design curricula for ASU General Education and continuing education courses to include greater emphasis on social embeddedness vision and activities.
  - Develop an on-going public relations campaign targeted at legislators and other elected officials about the value of a community-oriented education.

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18 Some of the names discussed include SE\(^3\) Social Embeddedness/ Social Entrepreneurship/ Social Enterprise; ASUdo; AZUCan; ASUdoes; It’s About Change; About Changing Arizona Together (ACAT); AZFramework for Collective Change (AForce); Acting Together for Arizona (ATAZ); All Together for Arizona; C3 Collective Community Change; SA-4: Shared Agenda and Action to Advance Arizona; and ASU-Connected.
• **Incorporate community input into teaching, learning, and research.**

*Recommended Actions*

- Launch pilot “ASU 1000” door-to-door research, using students, faculty, staff, and community members to survey the community about local community needs, concerns, and desires. Incorporate annual data into coursework, independent study, and research. (*See Appendix.*)
- Coordinate and manage regional dialogues/roundtables 1-2 times per year with civic and political leaders in key ASU communities (e.g. Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa, Glendale) (*See Appendix.*)
- Coordinate annual focus groups with leaders and constituents of nonprofit organizations to learn about community needs and priorities.
  - Incorporate findings into teaching and research.

**Research and Discovery**

• Conduct meaningful, relevant community research and share results broadly with Arizona communities in a consistent, ongoing fashion.

*Recommended Actions*

- Develop annual focus on key regional issue(s) as determined by the university in partnership with community.
- Strive for shared interdisciplinary, inter-center research as often as possible.
- Ensure broad dissemination of research results through publications, public presentations, and prominent positioning on ASU and other websites.

**Community Capacity-Building**

• Create and support sustainable partnerships that build on community knowledge and university resources.

*Recommended Actions*

- Develop a “community clearinghouse” at a high level within the University to evaluate community requests; to share resources; and to direct community inquiries. Establish a dedicated address, phone number, and e-mail address with a staff member assigned to track answers/solutions.
- Work in partnership, when possible, with community organizations to conduct research (e.g. local funders and nonprofits).
- Create an environment for discussion about the University’s appropriate role in the Arizona community.

*Recommended Actions*

- Build and sustain relationships with ASU alumni as “liaisons” between the University and the community (consider Alumni Summit and newsletter).
• Develop a comprehensive publication providing critical case studies of social embeddedness, including goals, successes, challenges, and lessons learned to be co-written by university and community partners.

• Host a range of speaker series and seminars to encourage dialogue among internal and external stakeholders in social embeddedness discussions.

• Plan and host community events and dialogues which tie into State plans for centennial celebrations in 2012, and which link ASU to the future vitality of the State.

**Economic Development and Investment**

**• Structure ASU’s economic investments to set a new standard for community partnership, university dialogue, and decision-making.**

*Recommended Actions*

• Utilize regional forums as venues for open dialogue on ASU’s plans for economic investments and on the appropriate role of the university in the Arizona community.

• Conduct surveys, as needed, of households and community leaders to determine level of support for ASU investments (especially in real estate and economic development) and to determine the economic and developmental needs and priorities of greater Phoenix and of the state in general. Use survey results to prioritize investment decisions.

• Share the results of the social embeddedness “audit” with the community and encourage on-going dialogue about the ASU “record” of community investment and development.

**Social Development and Well-Being**

**• Promote shared responsibility as a value for the university and the community.**

*Recommended Actions*

• Encourage community members to contact ASU with questions, concerns, and suggestions on any topic related to university/community relations. (See “community clearinghouse.”)

• Promote active participation of community members in any and all ASU “town hall” and other community meetings.

• To fully participate in the region, encourage faculty and staff to live in ASU communities (e.g. downtown Phoenix, Tempe, Glendale, Mesa) by promoting it as an “ASU Value.”

• Consider developing an ASU “Student/Neighbors Association” which promotes constructive relationships between local neighbors and students in adjacent off-campus housing.

Work in partnership with the communities of Arizona to increase the state’s social capital and to strengthen the capacity of communities.
• Ensure that the vision and goals of the community are understood and respected at all levels of the University, and are universally incorporated into the University’s teaching, learning and research.

Recommended Actions

• Determine and confirm mutually beneficial goals and expectations of community and university, through the establishment of a meaningful and ongoing communication process. (See Appendix.)

• Involve the community in the process to advance and transform this draft plan for a socially embedded university into a comprehensive “working plan.”

• Institutionalize a system of ongoing communication with the community.
  
  • Develop targeted communications strategies, messages, and approaches for diverse ASU and community constituents.
  
  • Develop a tabloid-style newspaper appropriate for insertion into all regional and statewide newspapers, including ethnic press, containing topical issues related to social embeddedness.

Work in partnership with the communities of Arizona to increase the state’s social capital and to strengthen the capacity of communities.
Goal #4: National Model

Establish ASU as a national model for university-community partnership

Goal Four: National Model
Overview of Strategies and Actions

• Become a national model for innovative approaches to community partnerships and for ground-breaking research into effective approaches.

• Establish university-wide evaluation model and tools to assess all projects considered to be socially embedded.

• Strive to help leaders and residents of greater Phoenix feel pride in ASU, that “ASU is our university and it makes a positive difference in our lives.”

• Engage students in conceiving new ways for universities to meet the growing demand for civic engagement.

• Seek to publish extensive articles, case studies, and other publications which document social embeddedness programs, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

• Host a website to promote national dialogue and offer a venue for examples of social embeddedness.

• Convene a national summit on social embeddedness with peer universities, establishing ASU as the exemplar of the Socially Embedded University.
Commentary

There are more than 4,000 institutions of higher learning across the United States. Every one of them is located in a community. Large and small institutions each have unique histories and relationships with their community neighbors. Every community has its own particular assets and also its own set of challenges, whether they be geographic, demographic, ecological, economic, or social.

Each educational institution has existing, and often long-standing, relationships with communities that are in close proximity to their campus or headquarters, based on individual or shared history, level of community need, and the availability of resources. Some institutions have relationships that span centuries, others only a few decades. Some universities have endeavored to be proactive in building working partnerships with their local communities; others have been dragged into relationships through acquisitions of property outside the campus boundaries; the need for campus development; neighborhood controversies related to student issues and behaviors; or a crisis that affects both students and residents; among other things. These issues have forced the institution to develop relationships with its communities on a reactive, rather than a proactive, basis.

ASU’s relationship with the region has changed as both the University and the metropolitan area have grown. Given the enormous demographic, social, and economic changes, the University and the metropolitan region are at a historic moment where it is not only advantageous, but also necessary to form a university/community partnership at a scale and intensity that has never been tried elsewhere.

As ASU moves toward the creation of a unique educational model, “the New American University,” and as greater Phoenix amasses its energy in ways that could make it qualify as the quintessential “New American City,” the leaders, students, and residents of the region have the opportunity to be pioneers in developing an innovative model to share with other communities and universities – to challenge and change the traditional relationship between “community” and academic institution. This model can challenge other universities and communities to understand the power and potential of partnership and of true embeddedness.

For Arizona State University, it is an enormous opportunity to lead; for the communities of the Valley, it is an incredible chance to define themselves for the coming decades – creating a vision that moves beyond growth, to embrace potential of building capacity by working in collaboration with the University.
Teaching and Learning

• **Encourage teaching of the theory of social embeddedness** across the curriculum and consider social embeddedness as a component of doctoral programs.

  *Recommended Actions*
  
  • Encourage colleges, departments, and units to strive for national recognition based on a community focus related to student admissions, teaching, scholarship, and overall commitment to community.

Research and Discovery

• **Become a national model for innovative approaches to community partnerships and ground-breaking research on effective approaches.**

  *Recommended Actions*
  
  • Develop evaluative tools and mechanisms to continuously ensure effectiveness of programs. Work with the community to ensure appropriate metrics and benchmarks. *(students/ faculty/ staff/ community)*
  
  • Establish a university-wide evaluation program and model to assess all projects considered to be socially embedded. Encourage cumulative learning and publication about the evolution and evaluation of each project to gain national attention and to promote ASU’s work. *(students/ faculty/ staff/ community)*
  
  • As part of the evaluation of social embeddedness activities at ASU, develop (and regularly update) a database inventory of socially-embedded activities, programs, projects, and decisions throughout the University and in the community (as distinguished from, or in addition to, what is currently noted on ASU in the Community website).
  
  • Write and seek to publish extensive articles, case studies, and other publications which document social embeddedness programs, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned.
  
  • Broadly share research on social embeddedness with peer universities (e.g. with presidents, provosts, deans, etc.).

Community Capacity-Building

• **Build a reputation for university-wide commitment to community engagement and openness to transformation through community involvement.**

  *Recommended Actions*
  
  • Host a website to promote national dialogue and as a venue for examples of social embeddedness.
• Seek venues for presentation and dissemination of ASU’s work in social embeddedness.
• Convene national summit on social embeddedness with peer universities, establishing ASU as the exemplar of the socially embedded university (the New American University.)

Economic Development and Investment
• Set a national example of a university with an exemplary record of responsible, community-oriented investment and development.

Recommended Actions
• Engage funders (public and private) in discussions on the value of sustainable relationships between universities and communities in order to build and maintain social capital, and to inform the creation and implementation of a shared vision for the future of the region and for the transformation of a university.
• Broadly share results of the social embeddedness “audit” with peer universities.
• Advocate for the development and adoption of a national economic investment “audit template” which could be used by colleges and universities across the country.
• Review university policies related to hiring, investment, contracting, vendor selection to ensure that such policies are imbued with social embeddedness concerns.

Social Development and Well-Being
• Become known as the university that “walks the talk, and talks the walk.”

Recommended Actions
• On an on-going, but infrequent, basis hire surveyors to talk casually to people “on the street” about ASU to learn what they know about, and think of, the University.
  • Consider phone survey to supplement the ASU 1000 effort to ensure large scale response.
• Use feedback from the survey to appropriately adjust elements of social embeddedness – e.g. vision, values, programs, etc.
• Strive to help leaders and residents of greater Phoenix feel that “ASU is our university and it makes a positive difference in our lives.”
“You will ensure sustainability by literally putting this at the core of the mission – not in a cosmetic, reflective, service function. You’ll ensure sustainability if you get what I would say is ‘institutional embeddedness.’ Without that, you’ll just have good public relations. Maybe you’ll have political peace, but it will be ephemeral.”

– External
The first part of the “Plan for a Socially Embedded University” sets forth an ambitious vision for transforming the relationship between Arizona State University and the greater Phoenix region. While the Plan provides a comprehensive set of goals and strategies for achieving its vision through programs, policies, and structural changes, it does not lay out the logistical or technical aspects of putting the plan into place. The management strategies in this section are intended to provide an overview of the broad tasks and decisions that must be undertaken in order to begin and sustain implementation of the goals articulated on the previous pages. It should be noted that once structural changes throughout the University have been finalized and enacted, this section will likely need to be revised and described in greater detail.

The plan documents the need for an integrated, all-encompassing approach – building from a base of five thematic areas – to foster ground-breaking changes including structure; curriculum; decisionmaking; information-sharing; and partnership-building that engages the community. While other universities have adopted one or more of these five elements in their community engagement programs, none have embarked on a program as comprehensive as the one ASU is setting – embracing the totality of the university.

Research indicates that the most successful and effective “programs” incorporate a constellation of initiatives aimed at changing the culture of a university and the perceptions and actions of the surrounding communities. In various combinations, many universities can point to numerous interesting, effective projects and programs including, but not limited to, service (or “community-based”) learning; sustained involvement in local public schools; mentoring and scholarship programs for local applicants for admission; curriculum development grants for faculty; competitive review of project proposals from faculty-community partnerships; and recognition programs for faculty, students, community members, and community organizations.

A number of community engagement programs and initiatives that showed great promise at the outset, lost momentum over time. Hypotheses abound for this phenomenon. A charismatic leader who oversaw all program efforts may have left. There may have been structural reasons, such as loss of funding; it could have been a failure to convince important partners, or win over a critical mass of the faculty. Society – and more importantly, funders – may have moved on from the post-1960s concern with the social problems that still plague inner cities and from the prevalent belief in the 1990s that urban universities could be key instigators for social change and support for community development. Ultimately, it could be that the start-up was more enticing, more exciting, and easier than the work entailed in building long-term sustainability.

Initial decisions about the structure, oversight, and governance of community engagement strategies have critically important consequences for program implementation, design, funding, and sustainability. Perhaps most important, structural decisions impact the perception as well as actual results of any community engagement initiative or undertaking.
One can argue all sides of the question of whether more resilience is gained by creating a “program” under the protection of a university president; or under a provost; or within an academic college, school, or department; or whether a comprehensive, stand-alone center has an advantage in terms of fundraising and flexibility. Based on research and site visits to other universities, it appears that both the “program” and “center” approaches have the potential to become easily marginalized as community engagement initiatives become seen as either being taken care of by “someone else,” or being independent of the academic and research mission of the university. The decision as to placement of community engagement strategies appears to be paramount to the success of all subsequent engagement work.

Operating within the office of the president lends an air of immediate credibility and sometimes helps to secure a permanent line in the budget. But the flip side of the presidential credibility is the fate of the program when the president leaves the university, unless ample provisions have been made for continuity and sustainability (i.e. if the effort itself is truly “embedded” throughout the university as well as in the community, etc.). It appears to help when the person running the engagement initiative, on the ground, has an elevated title such as vice president or “associate vice president.” Still, priorities and commitments change whenever there is a shift in leadership. An “academic home” for coordinated engagement activities (e.g. within a particular college) might have some advantages in gaining support from deans, which is seen as critical to building faculty participation, but this also tends to marginalize participation from other units across the campus.

While some universities have created “programs” within (or through) public affairs (or community/public relations, external affairs) departments, there was fairly unanimous consensus that being affiliated with these departments conflicts with the intention of community engagement and embeddedness that can impact academics, research, and communities themselves, without the impression that the intention is tied to the promotion of the institution.

No two universities surveyed by Fern Tiger Associates had the same organizational structure. In many cases an engagement “initiative” brought together at least a few (or in some cases, many) existing programs from different corners of the university. This sometimes involved renaming a pre-existing center or program/project – “Old wine, new bottles,” quipped one director, interviewed during the process. In some universities, the “program” was initiated by either the chancellor, president, or provost and later moved to an academic department, often after a personnel change at the top. Only at one university (Portland State University/PSU) does the ethic of engagement appear to be so broad-based and accepted as part of the university’s core mission that it does not seem to have, or to need, a structural niche. (PSU’s efforts were initially designed and managed quite directly by the President and Provost, who took an active and personal involvement in both the development of the concept and actual implementation of the strategies.)

“I really don’t want ASU to look like a corporation. We, in the business sector, already have enough people thinking a certain way. We want ASU to complement us, not to be us.”

- External
In every case, even at PSU, identifying and coordinating all of the diverse community projects being undertaken by academic units and individual professors is a continuing struggle and challenge. In defining the structure of a new initiative it is critical to evaluate the particular barriers to success internal to the university, and devise an organizational strategy that addresses those issues.

In moving forward on social embeddedness, ASU is in a particularly challenging position. While it does not appear that any college or university across the country has as comprehensive a definition of community engagement as ASU is developing; nor is any other institution staking a claim to an initiative as unique and innovative as ASU strives for. ASU has made a “big splash” in promoting the New American University – not only raising its profile nationally, but also – greatly increasing the expectations, both in its home communities and in presidential offices and faculty lounges across the country. Though ASU has an opportunity for significant impact, success, and recognition as it becomes a socially embedded university, it also has the potential to disappoint and fail at many levels if it cannot or does not deliver on its promises to revolutionize the relationships and partnerships between the University and the community.

ASU’s definition of social embeddedness focuses on a unique, new mission of empowering communities, transforming the University, and building leadership and social capital throughout the region. As such, it cannot be relegated to any one college, school, department or center at the University. Nor should the work be captured within a new institute or center requiring burdensome bureaucracy. The work of social embeddedness will flourish best in an atmosphere of openness and flexibility, allowing individuals and institutions to be nimble and creative, seizing new opportunities for innovation and partnership.

The vision and activities of social embeddedness, defined over the past year, are intended to permeate the University and the community. While it is obvious that these goals are long term, the work towards this vision cannot be saddled from the outset with traditional structures or constricted ways of thinking. Yet, despite this mandate of innovation, the Social Embeddedness Plan will still require some traditional and fundamental operational elements, including staff; a strategic leadership strategy; dedicated funding; physical facilities; a communications strategy and materials; a long-term plan for evaluation; and supporting technology.

The following pages frame the discussion of the strategies, needs, and requirements for:

• **Leadership:** Implementation of the goals and vision will require the consistent guidance and direction of a “Director of Social Embeddedness”\(^\text{12}\) with supporting, though limited, administrative staff.

• **Accountability/Oversight:** To ensure community and university buy-in, and to provide for a system of checks and balances, a “Planning and Oversight Committee” – comprised of representatives of ASU and the community – will be appointed to help guide and oversee activities related to social embeddedness. This committee will also conduct a portion of the annual performance review of the “Director.”

*“The number of things we are trying to do here... the scope of the agenda is huge relative to what is happening at other universities. And we are moving so fast: it’s like going from slow motion to high acceleration.”*

- Internal
Engagement/Communications/Outreach: One of the most important elements of the Plan is the design and implementation of a highly public “launch” and dissemination of intentions. The development of a comprehensive engagement strategy; branding; the creation of related publications and communications collateral; and ongoing presentations, communications, and outreach to support the launch, and build credibility as well as continuously increase understanding – while encouraging the cultivation of genuine partnerships – among and between community and University members will be critical.

Facilities: It is anticipated that the vision and values of social embeddedness will grow into an ethos threaded throughout ASU – ostensibly with no need for a physical “location.” Nevertheless, it will be important to have offices and meeting spaces at each of ASU’s four campuses as well as in a downtown Phoenix “street-front” location. Each should be designed to illuminate ASU’s commitment and be accessible to both the university and community. Ideally, these locations would be staffed 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. six days per week to encourage frequent visits and regular “drop-ins.”

Evaluation: A comprehensive, long-term plan for evaluation is essential to determine the viability, success, and impact of ASU’s integration with its communities and to understand and learn from the programs and activities established as exemplars of social embeddedness. This evaluation should include appropriate and rigorous quantitative and qualitative methodologies and documentation standards; an innovative approach to, and use of, flexible, interactive evaluation tools; the collection, analysis, and synthesis of data over a 10-15 year period; and ongoing publication and broad dissemination of results, including discussions of challenges, lessons learned, and next steps.

Technology: Implementation of the Plan will require dedicated and proactive technology including the development of a new, nationally-focused website, linked to relevant ASU and community websites. In addition, a selective redesign of ASU’s primary website should prominently feature the vision, values, strategies, and activities related to a socially embedded university.

Funding: To ensure the start-up, implementation, and sustainability of the vision and values of social embeddedness, substantial, ongoing sources of funding need to be identified and secured through the cultivation and solicitation of foundations, individual and corporate donors, and government funding programs. To show its commitment to the vision of social embeddedness and to provide active encouragement to potential donors, ASU should publicly announce significant, early seed funding which could then be matched by other donors.

“Working with communities requires building trust, time, reciprocity, and listening – not our strongest suits.”
- Internal
Leadership

In a perfect world, there would be no need for a single person to lead or direct community engagement activities. At a truly embedded university, individuals and units would have so completely embraced the notion of working and living in partnership with their communities that the concept of a “leader” of social embeddedness would be entirely foreign or absurd. In the study of best practices at other universities, Portland State University seemed to come the closest to the ideal of embracing a campus-wide value of community engagement. Though the president and provost initially took a hands-on role in guiding start-up efforts, PSU never designated one individual to “direct” program efforts. Instead, through extensive support, faculty members took on the mission of community empowerment, re-writing curriculum to reflect this value. At some point in the near future, it is hoped that ASU will reach a level of engagement with its communities that will be similarly sufficiently self-generating and organic as to not require the guidance of a “leader.” Nevertheless, as noted in the first goal of the Plan, this report recognizes the need for coordination and leadership to integrate the concepts of social embeddedness into the culture of the institution and to solicit, understand, support, and promote communities’ ideas of their needs and desires.

A “Director” should be recruited and hired to operate at the highest levels of the University, while acting as a liaison to academic units and to the communities, to guide the start-up efforts related to social embeddedness, to ensure the implementation of plans for sustainability, and to provide the vision and cohesive strategy for programs and related activities across the entire University and throughout the greater Phoenix community. It should be cautioned, the “Directorship” should not be viewed as a typical position within the institution. Key to the success of social embeddedness is the designation of this position as a unique role, reporting jointly to the President and University Provost in order to guarantee that the strategies of social embeddedness are considered, included, and pursued in all key decisionmaking. Additionally, this arrangement will demonstrate credibility to the critical mass of faculty at the University and to the community – if people believe he or she “has the ear” of the President and Provost.

Ideally, this professional would bring extensive experience and credibility in both academic circles and in community outreach/engagement/renewal projects that focus on social change. The leadership of social embeddedness should be in the hands of a broad, innovative thinker and leader who can guide the strategic efforts related to social embeddedness and to the transformation of ASU into the New American University.

“It’s not just that we are doing community service or service learning; we’re learning from the community. It’s a two-way street.”

- Georgia State University

19 Portland State University has a coordinator of a required series of courses - University Studies - focused on Urban Inquiry and a senior capstone. When Portland State developed its curriculum the Provost hosted a seminar for faculty to discuss new ways to teach and to engage with communities. What began as an informal discussion continued for two years and engaged more than 200 faculty of all ranks and disciplines.
The “Director” will continually articulate the concepts and best practices of social embeddedness; work tirelessly to integrate the principles of social embeddedness into the culture of ASU; act as a liaison with all University units to support socially embedded work; strategically coordinate activities in the community and at the University to align them with the vision and goals of social embeddedness; promote ASU’s work in national and international forums and publications; oversee the development of a comprehensive evaluation plan and ongoing evaluative efforts; and establish and maintain ongoing dialogue with communities in relation to all socially embedded activities and partnerships.

To accomplish the goals set in this plan, the “Director” will be responsible for attracting and sustaining long-term funding, goal development, implementation, evaluation, internal and external communications, and community engagement, while acting as a key advisor to the President and Provost to ensure broad implementation at all university levels including curriculum review and revision, as well as key decisionmaking that could impact university/community partnerships. As currently conceived, the “Director” will be supported by a full-time assistant and a small corps of graduate students who will receive academic credit and/or stipends. During the course of the first two years, the “Director” will develop a detailed plan for sustainability, address the potential for permanent funding, and develop a strategy for appropriate long-term staffing, as well as define long-range program goals and objectives beyond the period set by this plan.

It is hoped that at the close of approximately five to eight years (in 2012 - 2015), social embeddedness will have become so integrated into the fabric of a transformed New American University at ASU that there will no longer be a need for a high level position to actively oversee the development and implementation of this vision. It is likely, however, that an administrator will likely be needed, long-term, to coordinate and facilitate the various processes put into place, to ensure sustainability and ongoing success.

**Recommended Actions**

- Develop job description, responsibilities, and performance criteria for the “Director.”
- Determine appropriate salaries and benefits.
- Recruit and hire leadership for a contracted five year period.
- Support “Director” to define full-time assistant position and graduate student positions, and then hire appropriate personnel.
- Develop a detailed and realistic five-year budget.
- Support development of a detailed work plan and orientation for leadership.
- Evaluate Director performance, annually.
Accountability/Oversight

Social embeddedness has been described and outlined by President Crow as one of a series of “design imperatives” critical to the transformation of ASU into the New American University. When an institution sets off on a journey of profound cultural and structural change, it is generally helpful — perhaps necessary — to identify a set of road markers and milestones to guide the path. In ASU’s case the concept, values, and standards of social embeddedness need to be defined in order for people to grasp and understand the meaning. ASU has already made great strides by defining what social embeddedness means and by establishing goals to meet the vision of a transformed university. With strategic guidance and direction, over time, the importance of this particular design imperative will become part of the consciousness, not only of individuals, but of the institution itself, becoming a deeply held value. If truly successful, this value or ethos of community empowerment and mutually beneficial partnership between the University and the community will be woven seamlessly through the fabric of the University.

In order to reach that point, it will be important to have thoughtful guidance from a representative group of individuals who have an objective, but engaged, interest in the current needs, priorities, and future direction of both the institution and the community. Drawn from units across the University and from communities throughout greater Phoenix, this group will comprise a “Planning and Oversight Committee” which will help formulate the broad thinking, strategy, and direction of activities and outreach related to social embeddedness.

While the strength of the vision, preparation, and activities related to social embeddedness will require the oversight of this Planning and Oversight Committee — and strategic coordination by the “Director” — the true work of transforming ASU into a socially embedded university will happen at the unit level.

The general lack of understanding across the University of what it means to be socially embedded, or of how academic work can fit into such a vision, and/or the confusion between “service,” “empowerment,” “capacity building,” and “mutually-beneficial partnership” needs to be confronted, challenged, and eventually remedied with clarified understanding and acceptance at the unit, and even the individual faculty and staff, level. One might argue that while it is fairly obvious to see how some of the “social” disciplines — such as education, social work, nursing, and law — could, and already have, in some cases, translated academic work into ongoing community engagement that meets ASU’s definition of social embeddedness, other disciplines find it more difficult to make connections to fulfill the social embeddedness mandate.

Rather than require individual accountability for undertaking work related to the goals of social embeddedness, this plan recommends that responsibility for implementation be at the “unit” level. Units would appoint one or more “liaisons” to oversee and coordinate programs and activities on behalf of the unit, reporting regularly to the head of the unit, who would in turn “report” to the “Director” of Social Embeddedness.
Through this approach, it is expected that, over time, each person at the University will intuitively understand, share, and be part of this unique university whose ethos is integrated into the work of the institution, including close partnership with communities, to create an empowered, vital region.

**Recommended Actions**

- Identify and coordinate a *Planning and Oversight Committee*, comprised of University and community members. This committee will provide feedback and insight on the effective implementation of social embeddedness concepts and goals; initially develop appropriate roles and responsibilities for the committee (including length of service, expected time commitment, general duties, meeting procedures, etc.)

- Schedule regular meetings (at least semi-annually) for the “Director” with the President, Provost, and Planning and Oversight Committee to discuss program implementation, including desired results, anticipated challenges, progress of evaluation, and lessons learned.

- Ensure appropriate and timely pursuit of the social embeddedness vision and goals at the unit level, through regular communication with unit leaders/directors; the appointment of unit level “liaisons” responsible for overseeing program implementation at the unit level; and annual unit-level review of activities.

- Direct the Planning and Oversight Committee to conduct a portion of the performance appraisal of the “Director,” annually.

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“The language of ‘outreach’ is the language of an imperialist university. The language of ‘service’ creates a class relationship inside the academy where first-class citizens do research, and second-class citizens go to ‘centers of service.’ That attitude breaks up the university.”

- University of Illinois, Chicago
Engagement/Communications/Outreach

Since engagement takes many forms and plays many roles within an institution, as well as in (and with) communities, it is tempting to aggregate diverse forms of community relations [e.g. service-learning courses; student/faculty volunteer activities; campus events open to the public (e.g., arts, theater, sports); advocacy/government relations; public relations or external affairs; staff recruitment; and charity work; and even participation in municipal planning processes related to zoning, land use, or permitting needed by the university] and call it a comprehensive engagement initiative. What is missing in such an aggregate description is a strategic blueprint for collaborative engagement that aims to transform both the university and the community by truly pursuing an authentic, substantive, mutual partnership. Each of the university’s community partners and external “audiences” has different informational and programmatic needs and will define progress differently. Savvy community organizers, activists, and advocates will easily see through a collection of university programs that calls itself engagement but misses the community’s mark – creating confusion and mistrust of the university’s motives. More important, such “manufactured” community relations will not transform either the university or the community in ways that release the creative, social, and intellectual potential of a region.

Planning and research for social embeddedness programs at ASU have been underway since 2002, and most intensely for the past two years. Still, community members interviewed expressed skepticism about the University’s current relations with the community, decisionmaking processes, as well as future plans for engagement.

Community leaders say that the University administration does not distinguish between “schmoozing” or networking in pursuit of the University’s own interests, and what they describe as “real” community involvement that would include self-reflective questions about how to create appropriate relationships between the University and the community, and who should cultivate them. ASU’s community outreach website, “ASU in the Community” lists hundreds of community programs, “partnerships,” and activities but purposefully does not differentiate between any of the activities on the site – in terms of duration, importance, intensity, or impact, or relation to the social embeddedness definition. ASU’s website does not offer evidence of any overarching strategy for engaging with the community.

Unless people see, hear, and feel the impact of ASU’s unique transformative effort to be engaged and integrated with the community, the perception will be that this university is like others – involved in a series of well-intentioned “good works,” which are not connected to a larger vision and which do not necessarily increase social capital, empower the community, or help to move the community’s agenda forward. To change these perceptions, a well-conceived set of communications, engagement, and information-sharing plans will form a central and crucial component of the Social Embeddedness Plan.
To lay the groundwork, not only for awareness and support for social embeddedness, but also to gain national recognition, a full-scale public “hearing” of the initiative is imperative. This “launch” is currently conceived as a series of participatory university/community events, which not only have the potential for broad community engagement, and which could attract substantial local and national attention, but should also be seen as a sincere effort to expose the University’s plans to the scrutiny, criticism, and excitement of the community. Ultimately – it is hoped – this will begin a constructive, two-way dialogue between the University and the community.20

Given the diversity of communities, including neighborhoods, businesses, government, nonprofits, and ASU itself (students, faculty, staff, alumni) – and the complexity of the vision of social embeddedness, it will be critical to develop an inclusive, flexible, and comprehensive strategy for the “launch,” which offers appropriate roles and responsibilities for each of the various ASU and community constituents who will help carry out the strategy.

To support the launch and ongoing engagement, a wide variety of communications tools are recommended, including the branding of the partnership.21 Recommended materials include a publication of critical case studies, a tabloid insert in the Arizona Republic (see appendix), brochures, and other collateral. An engaging, user-friendly website should support interactive outreach efforts (see Technology). Some activities, which are directly related to social embeddedness programs – such as community roundtable discussions, a door-to-door community walk (the “ASU 1,000”), and a year-long speaker series – seek to tap into the wellspring of community knowledge, by honoring, respecting and documenting the history, traditions, local wisdom, “fault lines,” and common understanding of residents, activists, business and civic leaders, and elected representatives. These activities can, and should, be viewed as opportunities to share the vision and message about social embeddedness and solicit input throughout the process.

It should be noted that this section does not represent a complete and comprehensive communications strategy, but rather lays out the broad steps that should be taken to develop and implement appropriate, ongoing communication and information-sharing related to social embeddedness.

Recommended Actions

• Develop a comprehensive short- and long-term engagement strategy.
• Determine appropriate role and relations with and between other ASU departments which manage day to day visibility of University.
• Develop targeted communication strategies, messages, and approaches for diverse internal and external audiences.

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20 A detailed, initial plan for the “launch” has been drafted. Please see appendix for further information.

21 See page 52 for discussion of branding concepts.
• Develop an annual communications/outreach calendar (to set logical frame for events, dissemination of materials, release of publications, etc.)
• Share communications strategy/calendar with city officials and other community leaders on an ongoing basis.
• Broadly disseminate, within ASU and the wider community, information related to ASU’s vision of community engagement, including activities, research, evaluation results, etc.
• Brand social embeddedness so that it becomes known at ASU and within the greater Phoenix community.
• Develop visual identity and brand (including the development of an action statement) with community participation.
• Develop a comprehensive suite of communications materials:
  • Overview brochure with results from findings phase.
  • A book of social embeddedness case studies (approximately 24) appropriate for publication and broad dissemination, with four additional case studies each year, and a compendium every third year. Train graduate students to conduct interviews in conjunction with the development of case studies. (See page 70.)
  • A 16 page tabloid-style newspaper appropriate for insertion into the Arizona Republic and all regional and statewide newspapers, including ethnic media, containing topical issues related to social embeddedness at both ASU and nationally (including the current vision, national status, history, results of program activities, etc.).
    • Consider regional mailing.
  • Other project materials, as appropriate, including letterhead, business cards, flyers, brochures, posters, banners, etc. for university-wide and/or community outreach and information sharing.
• Plan and conduct a public launch of the Social Embeddedness Plan (See appendix.)
• Share the Plan, as well as the results of the findings of the 200+ interview, by creating an overview publication and disseminate initially to interviewees.
• Plan and implement presentations to all ASU units, as well as at student forums, and at faculty, staff, administration meetings – and to external communities – civic organizations, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, business executives, funders and philanthropists, unions, etc.
  • Consider hosting events for particular populations (interviewees, nonprofit leaders, elected officials, etc.) to present the plan and to garner support and participation.

“\textit{It’s a challenge to navigate the politics of the university. And because the university is so big, the politics change all the time, and yet that drives the direction of our work.}”

- Internal
• Recruit and train 1,000 ASU students, faculty, staff, and community members (“the ASU 1000”) to go door-to-door. Use data gathered from this effort to develop an annual campus-wide topic focus (e.g. healthcare, children, housing, etc.). Repeat process biannually.

• Develop and lead discussion groups (participants assembled by nonprofit leaders) throughout the community to solicit qualitative input and feedback on potential “themes” derived from ASU 1000.

• Plan and lead a series of roundtable discussions with university and community representatives in the key communities of Phoenix, Tempe, Glendale, and Mesa.

• Coordinate related media coverage of the launch activities.

• Assess and evaluate launch events and replicate appropriate activities annually/biannually.

• Develop and execute ongoing public events, presentations, discussions, and “happenings.”

• Plan and host speaker series and seminars to encourage dialogue between internal and external stakeholders in social embeddedness discussions.

• In conjunction with ASU’s 50th anniversary in 2008, develop and convene a national summit on social embeddedness with peer universities and community members, establishing ASU as a leader and exemplar of the “socially embedded university.” (Consider hosting national summit to overlap with Alumni Summit and Community Leader Summit.)

• Seek diverse venues for presentation and dissemination of ASU’s and greater Phoenix’s work in social embeddedness.

• Develop a national website dedicated to social embeddedness.
Facilities

Despite the fact that this Plan sets the stage for an underlying ethos of community empowerment which is relegated neither to the institution’s fringes, nor to a single domain, but rather threads through all units and the “interstitial spaces” of the University – ultimately, there must be “a there there.” While it is expected that the “Director” of Social Embeddedness will spend a great deal of time at all four ASU campuses and out in the community, nevertheless, he or she will need a “base” for support staff, for storage of materials, for meetings, and for research and thinking. These dedicated locations should be dynamic, welcoming, community spaces – providing a visible demonstration of ASU’s willingness to dissolve barriers between the University and the community.

To have ample access to the President and Provost, the “Director” and his/her staff should have a primary office on the Tempe campus with the appropriate technology, materials and supplies, private offices, and public meeting rooms to accomplish the mission of the Plan. In addition to the Tempe campus office, a “storefront” office and presentation space should be located in downtown Phoenix. The layout of this space should be designed to encourage fluid exchange of ideas between the University and the community. The “Director” should also have access to office and presentation space at each ASU campus and/or in each of the communities where ASU is located. Ideally, these facilities would be able to contain interesting regional photography, varying exhibits and installations of university programs at ASU as well as nationally, to host frequent roundtables and community “brown bag lunch” presentations, comfortable meeting spaces, community access to current and archived program materials, and extended hours of operation (e.g. evenings and weekends). Community members should be able to do research, to engage in collegial discussions, and to hold public meetings on issues important to the community and to ASU. It is expected that graduate students can staff these locations.

Recommended Actions

• Locate and build out/equip an appropriate office space on the Tempe campus with access to meeting spaces.

• Locate and conduct due diligence for a downtown Phoenix location, which should include at least one private office and flexible open space for the activities described; build out space and equip with technology, as appropriate.

• Reach an agreement with Provosts at other campuses (Polytechnic, West, and Downtown) for dedicated space (one office) and access to meeting areas.

“Phoenix — what a laboratory for us.”
- Internal
Evaluation

A study of best practices in community engagement nationwide (see Appendix) revealed a noticeable lack of comprehensive evaluation, exacting methodology, or published results. While university presidents and public affairs spokespersons, and even (in some cases) community leaders could point to examples of strong programs or cite anecdotal evidence of community impact or university and student benefit, no institution pointed to a rigorous evaluation of results and/or a well-articulated plan to track and analyze program activities (beyond quantitative descriptions of numbers of participants, numbers of activities, numbers of courses developed, etc.). Universities also lacked clear understanding of what an engaged university would look like if engagement touched all aspects of the institution. And universities had widely divergent expectations of outcomes, even within the same institution.

Considering the potentially broad impact, the millions of dollars expected to be invested, and the dedicated talent of residents and expert professionals, it will be imperative for ASU to plan at the outset for a comprehensive (and potentially innovative) ongoing evaluation of social embeddedness through a carefully considered discussion of expectations and measurements of success.

The evaluation should measure the impact university engagement has on students, faculty, the institution, and the community, as well as the impact the community, in turn, has on the university as a whole. Since ASU, together with the community, seeks not only to transform university/community relations in the greater Phoenix area, but to become a model for other communities and universities who aspire to similar change, this comprehensive evaluation will be important to demonstrate evidence of substantial impact and to validate the hypothesis that a university which is socially embedded acts as a catalyst to enrich the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the region.

To measure the level of impact, a longitudinal study (10-15 years) of both the process to implement the plan, as well as the “results” of social embeddedness efforts will need to be undertaken. The tangible (quantitative and qualitative) evidence of transformative results could take years to manifest themselves. Success will need to be determined through the analysis and synthesis of an extensive array of quantitative and qualitative data. This Plan recommends that ASU work together with the community to guide the development of a carefully-designed, reflective, and interactive evaluation, providing insights into the types of benchmarks and metrics necessary to measure “success,” as well as lessons learned and challenges that need to be overcome.

Collected data should include a broad range of inputs, including, but not limited to: student enrollment and satisfaction surveys; curriculum changes and academic courses offered; surveys related to the level of awareness of the socially embeddedness vision, among ASU and community members; questionnaires and surveys of public and community leaders; comprehensive audits to review the decisionmaking of University administrators in areas such as real estate investment and campus development; an assessment of demographic, ecological, economic,
education, and health data measuring the vitality of the region; metrics related to economic development and business investment in the regional community; oral histories; case studies; unique photographic and other visual documentation; archival materials; an analysis of program visibility beyond greater Phoenix; interview transcripts; the “stories” of social embeddedness told from diverse perspectives; lessons learned; and an assessment of the continuing sustainability of program efforts.

Given the nature of the work that ASU, in partnership with greater Phoenix, is considering and its potentially lengthy time-frame, it will be essential to form an evaluation team that will initially set the parameters for assessment and then determine how to implement it (with faculty, staff, students, and community, with an external evaluator, etc.). Sharing the results of the evaluation at periodic points in the process will help to inform ASU, the community, funders, and other institutions. An effective evaluation will allow ASU and the greater Phoenix community to stand apart from its peers for its unique, comprehensive, and unprecedented efforts to work together toward both a vision of community empowerment, and for documenting and analyzing successes, accomplishments, challenges, failures, and lessons learned. Success in evaluation efforts will likely gain regional and national recognition for ASU and greater Phoenix as a model program and will garner additional support for ASU and for the social embeddedness concept from funders, business and civic leaders, and elected officials.

**Recommended Actions**

- Recruit an ASU/community “Evaluation Committee” comprised of experts in research and innovative documentation techniques to set the parameters for assessment and measurements of success.

- Ensure dedicated funding for evaluation efforts on an on-going basis (See Funding strategies).

- Working together, ASU and community should determine metrics and benchmarks for data collection (e.g. indicators related to demographics, health, education levels, economic productivity, other quality of life indicators, etc.) and standards for documentation (e.g. oral histories, photographic and written documentation, archiving, etc.).

- Share interim evaluation results biannually, and a comprehensive evaluation every five years with ASU audiences and with residents, community leaders, elected officials, and peer universities.
Technology

Software and internet technology should be used to maximize the ability of individuals, communities, and institutions – both in greater Phoenix, and across the country – to provide information about and examples of opportunities for community empowerment and to share best practices in social embeddedness programming, and university/community engagement.

ASU and the community should take advantage of technology innovations to collect and store information in databases; to broadly share that information via easily-accessible websites; and to use web-based forums for promoting local and national dialogue about social embeddedness.

ASU should also consider the potential for its innovative work in integrating a research university with a complex, growing community to create a “movement” among research universities across the country to consider new ways of thinking about education, research, and service. Such academic institutional change would require broad discussion, which ASU could host.

Recommended Actions

• Redesign ASU’s website to ensure that social embeddedness has central prominence on the homepage; that there are easy and accessible links to other information about social embeddedness programs at ASU and links to other relevant websites in the community and nationally.

• Re-frame “ASU in the Community” to be an interactive and participatory community mapping process and to better reflect the vision and goals of social embeddedness in terms of the types of programs and activities that are listed as exemplars of effective community engagement.

• Encourage links to ASU website from community, civic, academic partners.

• Create a database of examples of social embeddedness programs that match the community’s and ASU’s definition (e.g. related to health, education, economic development, etc.) and demonstrate how they fit into the greater vision and goals for social embeddedness with greater Phoenix and at the University.

• Separately, as part of the “community clearinghouse,” develop a community empowerment database, an interactive site which provides a comprehensive list of opportunities for ASU involvement in the community, and community involvement at ASU; link the community database to the ASU homepage and other related websites.

• Develop and host a web-based national forum to share examples of best practices in the ASU/Phoenix community and to encourage dialogue about successes and challenges inherent in working towards a comprehensive vision of social embeddedness.

• Ensure dedicated funding for technology investments related to social embeddedness. (See Funding.)
Funding

As government funding for higher education and university research declines, and as the gap between tuition payments and the cost of a university education grows, universities are forced into a business model that prioritizes internal efficiency and partnerships with wealthy corporations while de-emphasizing work with community collaborators (who generally cannot provide significant sources of funding) and the learn-by-doing approach that can make community-based instruction rich, enlightening, and transformative for students and rewarding for community-based organizations. Commitment to the goal of integrating the transformation of a city with the transformation of a university (by understanding the needs of neighbors and cities as integral to the needs of the university) must extend beyond the president or chancellor to the trustees or regents, and to faculty, students, local elected officials, and community leaders. Any effective engagement initiative will need a distinct budget and clearly defined reporting authority, separate from the budgets and reporting lines for economic development activities, public relations/public affairs, and student activities.

To be sustainable, social embeddedness will need the commitment of both start-up and ongoing funding. The more notable community engagement programs at other universities have had committed sources of funding for some period of time; in fact, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has observed that a minimum of eight years of sustained funding is critical. For ASU to be successful, it is critical that the Social Embeddedness Plan have substantial, dedicated funds for the foreseeable future.

The start-up phase will require funding for the planning and implementation of the public “launch” of the community engagement process, as well as for the recruitment and initial hire of the “director;” build-out costs for office locations; the development of communications and outreach collateral; the development of a website and for some degree of reconfiguration of the primary ASU website; planning for the evaluation; and for processes to transform this ASU-focused plan into a plan which has been shaped with and embraced by the community.

Ongoing program funding will be necessary to fund salaries, communications materials (including in-depth case studies, tabloid inserts for major newspapers, brochures, flyers, etc.) and a broad range of outreach activities for both ASU and the community; planning and implementation of a biannual National Summit; and a comprehensive, longitudinal program evaluation, among other things. It is estimated that start-up costs will be approximately $750,000; while longer-term ongoing costs will be about $1.3 - $2 million for each of the first three years. The Plan is designed as a series of interlinking parts, each of which could provide an attractive funding opportunity (alone, or combined with other parts) for private philanthropists, foundations and corporate donors, government programs, and other public and private donors.

“How do you pay for this? It’s not really very flashy. You need to find donors to set up a steady stream of funds. But then again, maybe funders and donors will be able to see the benefits and realize that this is really important.”
- External
To transform the teaching and learning at ASU so that it emphasizes community empowerment as well as the development of social capital in Arizona and at ASU’s four campuses, the Plan recommends the creation of a Curriculum Innovation Trust, which will require separate, but related, funding. The Trust will challenge faculty members, whole departments, and entire colleges to rethink curriculum and to incorporate engagement activities that will develop socially-committed students prepared to become productive, active leaders, while simultaneously building the capacity of the community to address its own needs in new and sustainable ways. Faculty members, alone or in teams, will apply to the Trust for grant funding to underwrite new curriculum development. ASU should provide seed money of approximately $100,000, to be matched by private funders – on at least a one-to-one basis – to create a minimum annual fund of $200,000. A series of small grants (approximately $5,000 to $25,000 each) would be distributed annually through a competitive, peer-review process.  

**Recommended Actions**

- Research potential funding prospects, including public and private sources regionally and nationally. (Initial research on possible local funding sources has been started. See Appendix.)
- Develop a comprehensive funding strategy and plan within the first six months of project start-up.
- Coordinate fundraising strategy for social embeddedness with other units throughout the University and with the ASU Foundation.
- Cultivate private donors, including ASU alumni, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and retirees to fund specific parts of the Plan.
- Assess the potential for government funding support (local, state, national) of the Plan.
- Where possible, consider dedicating resources from ASU’s General Fund, rather than from “soft money” sources.
- Draft grant templates to be used in grant-seeking efforts that will occur over the subsequent two to three years.
- Implement funding plan.
- Develop plan and strategy – including fundraising efforts – for the Curriculum Innovation Trust.

22 An initial, detailed plan for the Curriculum Innovation Trust has been drafted. See appendix for details.