Is Your University Engaged?
A Large Metropolitan University's Approach to House Data to Support its Community Engagement Endeavor

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Overview

- Introduction
- Carnegie Community Engagement Classification
- UCF Engagement web application

  - Benefits

  - Challenges

  - Functionality

  - Structure & design

  - Next steps

UCF Overview

- Basic Carnegie classification: research universities (very high research activity)
- UCF also achieved Carnegie Community Engagement Classification
- 2nd largest university in U.S. with over 58,000 students
- 1,415 acres on Orlando campus
- 10 regional campuses and numerous other instructional sites
- extensive distance learning offerings
- 12 colleges, including a medical college
- 216 degree programs (91 bachelor's, 92 master's, 3 specialist, 29 doctoral, 1 professional)

Origin And Purpose Of The Carnegie Classification (Driscoll, 2008)

- Developed in the early 1970's by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education to inform its research program
- A tool for simplifying the complexity of US higher education
- Based on empirical data on what institutions do
- Later published for use by others "conducting research on higher education"

(Driscoll (2008). Strategies for Institutional Engagement. A Conference for Deans, Chairs, and SL Coordinators, Oklahoma City)

Elective Classification for *Community Engagement* (Driscoll, 2008)

- An *elective* classification is one that relies on voluntary participation by institutions, and does not include the full universe of institutions

- The term, *community engagement,* is proposed because it offers the widest coverage, the broadest conception of interactions with community, and promotes inclusivity in the classification

(Driscoll (2008). Strategies for Institutional Engagement. A Conference for Deans, Chairs, and SL Coordinators, Oklahoma City)

Carnegie Community Engagement Classification Definition

UCF

Describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity (The Carnegie Foundation, 2010)

Why Carnegie Community Engagement Classification matters to UCF

- UCF's strategic plan focuses on partnerships and community involvement
- Better portray outreach and engagement work
- Enrich teaching and learning curriculum
- Widen research and scholarship
- Develop engaged citizens
- Address societal issues
- Make impact on public good
- Increase civic responsibility

(Driscoll (2008). Strategies for Institutional Engagement. A Conference for Deans, Chairs, and SL Coordinators, Oklahoma City)

Steps Leading to building a knowledge Management System

- Evidence of community involvement
  - college and department silos
- Loads of paper documents
- Data collected was in different formats
  - missing critical pieces of information
- Lack of a centralized repository
- Difficult to run reports in a timely manner

Purpose of Engagement Web Application

Design, develop, and implement a Knowledge Management System with the goal of centralizing all information related to engagement projects

Benefits of Engagement Web Application

Systematic and centralized capture, storage and dissemination of information

- Central repository for engagement projects
  - comprehensive view of UCF's engagement initiative
  - better institutional memory
- Structured way of capturing project characteristics and impacts
- Data availability and uniformity
  - improved communication promoting best practices
  - easier to extract and report information in a timely manner
- Fosters partnerships among UCF constituents who are performing same or similar services with community groups
- Helps to articulate community involvement by leadership

Challenges

- Format
  - static survey vs. interactive "survey" – web application
  - succinct - not too long vs. comprehensive
  - uniformity across various projects
  - developing a web application for a business process that is evolving "not-set-in-stone"
- Inadequate requirements documentation
- Iterative roll out ([example](#))
  - adjust stakeholder expectations
  - help content and instructions
- Resources
  - realistic timeline
  - commitment of staff time

Drop down menu options:

Ac   Save Cancel

Who is this project primarily focused on?	
Everybody in the community	
Animals	
Children & Youth	
People with physical or mental disability	
Racial or Ethnic Minorities	
Elderly	
Gays, Lesbians, Bi-sexuals & Transgendered	
Immigrants	
Veterans & Military familites	
Women	

What is the subject matter emphasis of the project?	
Arts and Culture	
Computer & Technology	
Economic Development	
Environment	
Government and Politics	
Helathcare	
Homeland security	
Justice & Legal system	
Media and Broadcasting	
Religion	
Health, sports and recreation	
Education and Literacy	
Historical heritage and culture	
International affairs	
Poverty	

	How did the project go about achieving its mission?	LEVEL OF INVOLVMENT		
		Provide general information and/or consult on specific issues with the primary stakeholders of the project	Actively Collaborate on efforts with the primary stakeholders of the project	Empower the primary stakeholders to seek accurate information and implement them
ACTION ITEMS	Advocacy of human rights and equality			
	Adult Education			
	Campaigning and Raising awareness			
	Community development			
	Community outreach			
	Conservation			
	Crisis support/Intervention			
	Disaster relief			
	Preventing domestic violence			
	Enterpeneurship/Business startups			
	General care			
	Helping with ex-offender reentry			
	Family planning and reproductive and sexual health			
	Help understand or navigate legislative and political process			
	Helplines			
	Preventing hunger			
	Neighborhood revitilization			
	Public safety			
	Preventing and/or helping homeless			
	Help with Hospice care			
	Help with housing			
	Mental health			

Back

Application Tour

Structure and Design: Tools Used

- Back end
  - ASP.NET(Visual Basic)
  - MS SQL Server 2005
- Front end
  - jQuery v1.6.4 (http://www.jquery.com)
  - jQuery UI v1.8.12
  - Wijmo v1.1.6(http://www.wijmo.com)

The Back end

- ASP.NET is relegated to database-related tasks
  - A server side language should not extend beyond handling an application's inner workings
  - Also used for templating and modularizing key features

The Back end (continued)

- MS SQL Server handles all database activities
  - Utilizes tables linked by unique ID values

  - Any SQL Server (MySQL, Postgre, etc.) could be used for this task

The Front end

- jQuery (v 1.6.4) was used to handle and enhance parts of the site the user interfaced with
  - jQuery is a JavaScript framework that helps reduce the amount of coding needed for certain tasks
  - Free, open-source, easy to learn, and platform independent

- jQuery UI (v 1.8.12) provided key user-interface enhancements

  - Handles pop-ups, tabbed interfaces, enhanced tooltips, datepickers, etc.

  - Easy to theme

- Wijmo (v 1.1.6) extends jQuery UI

  - Enhances UI components

  - Fills in some gaps in jQuery UI

Comparing jQuery to .NET AJAX

- AJAX is a critical component to the Engagement web application
  - AJAX stands for Asynchronous Javascript And XML
  - Allows a webpage to run backend code without making the page refresh
- Microsoft provides their own AJAX and UI components with ASP.NET

Comparing jQuery to .NET AJAX (continued)

ASP.NET AJAX

- Free (with Visual Studio)
- Works only on .NET platforms
- Easy to implement

- Robust UI suite
- Proprietary
- **AJAX method generates excess code and may slow down the site if overused**

JQUERY

- Free
- Works with any platform
- Ease of implementation varies
- Developing UI Suite
- Open-source
- **AJAX method does not generate excess code**

Beta Test v1.0

- Conducted at the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning Summer Conference

- Lessons Learned
  - Clarify terminology
  - Modify workflow
  - Add data elements
  - Best archiving practices

Next Steps

- Support from the provost
  - Currently have support from other VPs
- Beta Test v2.0
- Soft roll out
  - Fall Semester 2011 to service learning faculty
- Design and development of reports
- Staff functionality
- Archiving