THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
Initiative 2001

Task Force II: Serve Kansans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The charge to Initiative 2001 Task Force II: Serve Kansans, was to develop a Philosophy of Service for The University of Kansas and a plan for implementing the new Philosophy of Service.

The Task Force received input from internal and external constituencies, which was valuable in placing KU’s current service efforts in perspective and in sowing the seeds of the ideas that grew into the recommendations offered in this report.

In response to the charge, the Task Force endorsed the following definition of public service:

"Public service is the purposeful application of teaching, research, and scholarship to the needs of citizens and communities within Kansas and beyond. Public service involves active outreach that is responsive to the needs of diverse constituencies within the State, with special emphasis toward assisting underserved communities and disadvantaged populations. Such responsive outreach requires the formation of vital partnerships between representatives of the University and Kansas communities."

Very early in the deliberation and information-gathering processes, members of the Task Force became aware of several factors affecting the current environment regarding service at KU.

Current Environment

The University of Kansas traditionally has viewed its service mission as including:

• The education of students;
• Service to the University through departmental, school, and campus activities;
• The provision of service by units with a specific service mission, e. g., the Geological Survey; and the many KUMC outreach programs.
• Service to the community as a good citizen.
The following current issues were identified based on input from internal and external constituencies:

- There is no specific definition of "service" in official mission-related documents.
- There is no central point of access to service.
- There is no institution-wide mission statement.
- Service-based learning has not been a priority.
- Much of the service provided is not recognized either internally or externally.
- Faculty and staff are not rewarded significantly for service.

The recommendations of Task Force II reflect a vision and a hope that more KU faculty, students, and staff will undertake relationships of service with the people of Kansas. Service-based learning recognizes that, in many fields, students learn best when engaged in service and serve best when learning. The intent of the following recommendations is to elevate the emphasis placed on service to Kansans at the institutional level while allowing for flexibility in how each campus fulfills its service mission.

- Adopt a philosophical statement that clarifies KU's institutional commitment to serving Kansans.
- Establish a University of Kansas Center for Public Service.
- Adopt an institution-wide mission statement that addresses the commitment to public service, especially to the people of Kansas.
- Incorporate or integrate a commitment to serving Kansans into the mission statement of each campus of the University.
- Promote service-based learning as part of the teaching curriculum.
- Establish a University-wide communications plan and enhance communications technology.
- Enhance the legitimacy of and incentives for public-service activities.
- Establish benchmarks to gauge progress in achieving the University's public-service mission.

In summary, The University of Kansas has a unique responsibility and a public obligation to engage in service with the citizens of Kansas in a meaningful way. This service mission is an integral component of education and research. The overall relevance of what is discovered and learned through scholarship ultimately must apply to and be useful to the communities we serve.

For the University of Kansas to achieve its service mission effectively, an emphasis on developing an infrastructure, with built-in incentives for service, must be established as a key priority for the future.

CHARGE

The original charge to the Task Force is paraphrased as follows:

- Develop a Philosophy of Service for The University of Kansas.
- Develop a plan for implementing the new Philosophy of Service.
The philosophy should recognize:

- Our special role within the State, including areas of "sole franchise" such as medical education;
- The responsibility that all members of the University share in service delivery; and
- The inherent strength of service programs that are built upon research and teaching activities.

The Task Force should identify:

- Existing incentives to service.
- Barriers to service.

In crafting the plan for implementing the new Philosophy of Service, the incentives and disincentives that presently exist for faculty and staff should be considered.

The recommendations should be concrete and for the long-term future of the University. They should include:

- Suggestions for changing some of the ways in which we do things currently.
- Recommendations for developing new activities.
- Addressing all components of the scholarly community:
  - Faculty and staff knowledge and talents
  - Student attitudes and aptitudes
  - The research environment
  - Information technology
  - International opportunities
- Infrastructure.
- Student, staff, and faculty development.
- The future role of
  - The Lawrence campus Office of Research and Public Service, and
  - The KUMC Office of Academic Affairs

**RESPONSE TO CHARGE**

**Definition of Public Service**

The Task Force endorsed the following definition of public service:
"Public service is the purposeful application of teaching, research, and scholarship to the needs of citizens and communities within Kansas and beyond. Public service involves active outreach that is responsive to the needs of diverse constituencies within the State, with special emphasis toward assisting underserved communities and disadvantaged populations. Such responsive outreach requires the formation of vital partnerships between representatives of the University and Kansas communities."

The rationale for this focus is that, as a public, comprehensive, research-and-teaching university, KU has a special responsibility to be of service to the citizens of Kansas and to contribute to the global community. The University's commitment to public service is demonstrated through teaching and research that contribute to the public interest. Despite variation among academic units in the application of teaching, research, and scholarship to the citizens of Kansas, the mission of the University as a whole is dedicated to this goal.

**Background**

The Morrill Act of 1863 developed a model that has led the world in terms of dismantling the walls perceived to envelop university campuses. Land-grant universities, via their cooperative extension services, have been able to disperse knowledge, technology, and service by maintaining a physical presence in each county within their respective states. New service-pathway opportunities, such as communications technologies including the Internet, are now available and will allow universities such as KU to participate in public service as never before, in effect providing a virtual presence across Kansas and beyond.

Faculty are charged with the production and distribution of knowledge. In contrast to acts of benevolence or civic duty, a faculty member's contributions to service should be integrated with research and teaching. The creation and application of knowledge is not a solitary activity, however. As faculty form direct, effective, and evolving relationships with external constituencies, the creation and distribution of knowledge should be reciprocal.

Student participation in service tends to result from initiatives undertaken by student organizations. Some academic units, such as Public Administration, Medicine, Social Welfare, and Education, require students to serve as interns during their educational programs. However, across the University, no organized program for student service-based learning exists.

**Current Environment**

Early in the deliberation and information-gathering processes, members of the Task Force became aware of several factors with respect to service at KU.
The University of Kansas traditionally has viewed its service mission as including:

- The education of students;
- Service to the University through departmental, school, and campus activities;
- Service related to one's profession outside the University;
- The provision of service by units with a specific service mission, e.g., the Kansas Geological Survey and the many KUMC outreach programs; and
- Service to the community as a good citizen.

The following current issues were identified on the basis of input contributed by internal and external constituencies:

There is no specific definition of "service" in official mission-related documents of the University.

Other than general phrases in the mission statement for the Lawrence and Medical Center campuses, there is no specific definition of "service" in official documents.

However, the governance policies of academic programs in promotion and tenure guidelines define how service will be factored into decisions concerning promotion and tenure. Institutional guidelines include three categories of service: (1) service to the University, (2) service related to one's profession outside the University, and (3) honors or awards for professional service. How these policies are made operational may be the most influential of all policies or official statements in determining how faculty and professional staff interpret the value placed on service by the University. At the academic-department level, service tends to be interpreted by faculty as service to a discipline or department rather than service to Kansans. Consequently, faculty may engage in service to the State but may do so as a result of their personal and professional interests rather than as an assumed responsibility to meet institutional expectations. The exceptions are staff and faculty who are affiliated with those centers and institutes designed to conduct research and be responsible to State needs related to their focus.

There is no central point of access to service.

Access to KU has been presented as a major problem, because no central point of access to service is available. No comprehensive mechanism is in place to inform constituents about KU services; likewise, no efficient way exists for faculty and staff to form a link with Kansans who need services, especially those in underserved and disadvantaged communities. Moreover, the University needs to do a better job of showcasing its existing services. To further that goal, University Relations should adopt a leadership role in establishing a dialogue with the public.
There is no institution-wide mission statement.

Each campus of the University has a mission statement, but there is no over-arching, institution-wide mission statement.

Service-based learning has not been a priority.

There is a general perception that service-based learning has not been a priority in designing the teaching curriculum and student experiences. Service-based learning recognizes that, in many fields, students learn best when engaged in service and serve best when learning. Thus, there is a need to develop more service-based opportunities for students.

Service currently provided is not recognized either internally or externally.

The amount and types of service performed by KU faculty and staff are neither well understood nor recognized by the vast majority of Kansans—even among the KU family of alumni, students, and employees. Unfortunately, some service is perceived by recipients and by the public as coming from specific sub-units of the University rather than from KU as an integrated entity. Many people at KU and many parts of the University perform service for Kansans. Although it would be valuable to develop a complete catalog of services, it would be an extensive and expensive undertaking that would be difficult to keep current.

Faculty and staff are not rewarded for service.

Faculty and staff perceive correctly that significant salary increases and promotions at KU do not occur on the basis of high-quality service to Kansans. That is, the institutional reward structure is not designed to recognize public service to Kansans in any lasting and meaningful way.

RELEVANT DATA

Gathering Information

To comprehend where KU stands with respect to service to Kansans, the Task Force collected data from several sources, in a variety of ways. The data-collection and evaluation process was not designed with an eye toward statistical or scientific rigor. Rather, it was done with the goal of extracting innovative ideas from a large cross-section of potential KU constituencies in a relatively short time.
The Task Force received input from both internal and external constituencies. For example, the Faculty Senate, Classified Senate, and the Unclassified Professional Staff Association made presentations to the Task Force. Input was received from several KU units that provide service as part of their formal missions, including the Audio Reader Service, Continuing Education, the KU Libraries, the Capitol Center in Topeka, and both campuses of the KU School of Medicine. Existing documents provided additional useful information. Some of the information is in the form of internal KU reports. Other forms included letters and memos provided by faculty, staff, and students in response to invitations published in the media, including The Oread, Topics, and Kansas Connections. Input from these groups and individuals was valuable in putting KU's current service efforts into perspective and in sowing ideas that grew subsequently into recommendations.

The Task Force also conducted a number of interviews with existing and potential external constituencies. Task Force members asked the following questions:

• In the future, how can KU better serve the people and communities of Kansas?
• Can you give specific examples of how KU serves Kansans today?
• What are the barriers or obstacles that must be overcome for KU to serve Kansans well?
• How can KU and you (or your organization) work together to serve Kansans well?
• How will we know that we are serving Kansans well?

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The following recommendations reflect a vision and a hope that more KU faculty, students, and staff will undertake relationships of service with the people of Kansas, which includes finding ways to promote mutually beneficial alliances. New and expanded KU/community partnerships that feature reciprocal learning among university faculty, staff, and students and their community partners will develop. The University can and should apply its talents more effectively to issues that matter to the people of Kansas and to concerns that are of particular importance to underserved communities that have fewer resources with which to address those concerns. The Task Force envisions that KU will become a State and national leader in integrating public service with research and teaching.

The intent of these recommendations is to put in perspective the value placed on service to Kansans at the institutional level. The recommendations also allow for diverse ways of contributing to public service. Collectively, the several campuses will work in a collaborative manner to fulfill the institution's commitment to Kansans. Such an approach also reinforces the "One University" concept.

1. Adopt a philosophical statement that clarifies the institutional commitment to serving Kansans, describes the institutional expectations of faculty and staff, and offers a vision for the involvement of students in service as part of their academic studies.
A Philosophy of Service statement would go beyond referencing service in an institution-wide mission statement and would reflect the University's commitment to the integration of its roles in teaching, research, and public service. It would be broadly disseminated to faculty, staff, and students. As would be true of an institution-wide mission statement, individual campuses may vary in how they implement the service philosophy, depending on their respective missions.

It is recommended that the following **Philosophy of Service statement** be adopted:

The University of Kansas as a comprehensive public research and teaching university has a commitment to the State of Kansas. This commitment goes beyond the institution's commitment to the creation, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge through teaching and research. The University of Kansas has a special responsibility to participate in assisting communities and State agencies in achieving the best quality of life possible for Kansas citizens. This commitment is consonant with our responsibility to the State to create and maintain academic and research programs. We cannot assume that our commitment to serving Kansans is met solely through the institutes and centers whose individual missions include the provision of specific services to Kansans. We should strive to provide our students with the opportunity to serve Kansans as a way of encouraging their participation in service when they become members of communities and pursue their respective careers. The University community (faculty, staff, and students) shares in meeting the institution's commitment to addressing what matters to the people of the State.

2. **Establish a University of Kansas Center for Public Service.**

The public service outreach effort of The University of Kansas affects all campuses of the University; therefore, the magnitude of such an initiative requires significant effort and resources. The Task Force does not believe that attaching a new Center to the Office of Research and Public Service in Lawrence or to the KUMC Office of Academic Affairs would be either effective or appropriate. Because the purpose of this office would be to coordinate Statewide efforts from the several campuses, someone reporting directly to the Chancellor should manage the responsibility. This seems to be the only mechanism available to coordinate outreach from the several campuses. Another possibility would be to include this effort in an expanded mission in the just-forming Robert J. Dole Institute for Public Service and Public Policy.

The Center's functions should include the following:

- Provide a gateway through which the public can gain access to KU resources that serve the public interest (e.g., technical assistance, community problem solving, technology transfer, and Area Health Education Centers);
- Connect students (and faculty advisers) to opportunities for public service through a student-run clearing house (i.e., similar to the student-run Center for Community Outreach, and the medical students' Community Health Project);
• Establish and maintain an inventory of public-service initiatives by faculty, staff and students, including by city and county in Kansas; and by issue (e.g., preventing adolescent pregnancy, improving water quality, and the nutritional consultation toll-free telephone line);
• Facilitate communication among KU public-service initiatives for better coordination at Statewide and community levels;
• Facilitate and support models of public-service involvement with the people of Kansas, including those underserved constituencies that lack resources;
• Communicate exemplary models of KU-community partnerships that address issues that matter to the diverse populations in Kansas; and
• Provide full-time equivalent staff (2 FTE) and administrative support (1 FTE) to coordinate and stimulate public-service efforts throughout the University.

3. **Adopt an institution-wide mission statement that addresses the commitment to public service, especially to the people of Kansas.**

The statement should focus on the institution's commitment to serving the State beyond the traditional reference to teaching, research, scholarship and the dissemination of knowledge.

4. **Integrate a commitment to serving Kansans into the mission statement of each campus of the University.**

Each campus of the University should develop a mission statement that includes a commitment to serving Kansans, to be represented in the institutional mission statement.

5. **Promote service-based learning as part of the teaching curriculum.**

Service-based learning recognizes that in many fields, students learn best when engaged in service and serve best when learning. Students should be encouraged to perform academically appropriate service functions for academic credit. These opportunities could include:

• Providing faculty supervision and academic credit for service-based learning opportunities (e.g., practica, independent study, cooperative education, alternative spring break, summer public-service programs).
• Developing faculty workshops on incorporating service-based learning in courses, among all departments and schools, at undergraduate and graduate levels.
• Adopting creative semester scheduling to facilitate students working with diverse populations and communities.
• Creating a Special Honors degree designation (e.g., with Public Service Honors) for students who incorporate extensive (e.g., 200 hrs.) public service in their learning before graduation.
• Providing travel and other resources that connect University faculty, staff, and students with organizations and communities in Kansas.

6. Establish a University-wide communications plan and enhance communications technology.

The communications plan should include actively listening to the people of Kansas to help direct the strategic plan of the University. University Relations should proactively promote not only the University, but faculty and staff and their contributions to public service, teaching, and research.

• Enhance the mission of University Relations to include the establishment of a University-wide communications plan and to develop and communicate information about public-service activities at the University.
• Develop a uniform communications structure that is understandable and accessible to citizens.
• Develop ongoing, community-based focus groups to allow influence by a broad array of people in Kansas to provide input on University activities and planning.
• Upgrade communications technology (e.g., satellite video teleconferencing) to enhance links among the University campuses and with organizations and communities serving the public interest throughout Kansas.
• Enhance support services for distance learning and on-line courses that could serve enrolled students and non-enrolled citizens in local Kansas communities.
• Provide full-time professional staff to University Relations (1 FTE) who would work exclusively to enhance KU communications, disseminate the public-service mission, and coordinate closely with the KU Center for Public Service.

7. Enhance the legitimacy of and incentives for public-service activities.

• Revise performance criteria for faculty and staff to reward public-service activities that are integrated with research and teaching by, among other measures, awarding larger salary increases and contributing favorably to promotion and tenure decisions.
• Solicit funds for a named professorship in public service, which would pass to a different person each year. This will honor and reward excellence in integrating public service with scholarly research and teaching.
• Solicit funds for named/endowment awards for distinguished public service including cash awards, honoring ceremonies, and recognition plaques in appropriate administrative buildings.
• Establish a General Public Service fund to provide grants to faculty and staff for projects that integrate public service into research and teaching. These resources should provide seed money to encourage innovations in public service.
• Establish undergraduate and graduate fellowships in public service. These awards will provide stipends to recognize and enhance students' exemplary contributions in joining their research and learning to public service to the communities of Kansas.

8. Establish benchmarks to gauge progress in achieving the University's public-service mission.

• Develop methods of tracking the University's service performance through time. Some measures should be continuous, whereas others, such as public-opinion surveys, should be done on a periodic basis, for example every three or four years.
• Provide an effective feedback mechanism for demonstrating this progress to faculty, staff, students and the public at large.

SUMMARY

In summary, The University of Kansas has a unique responsibility and a public obligation to engage in service to the citizens of Kansas in a meaningful way. This service mission is an integral component of education and research. What is discovered and learned through scholarship must ultimately apply and be useful to the communities we serve.

For The University of Kansas to achieve its service mission effectively, an emphasis on developing an infrastructure, with built-in incentives for service, must be established as a key priority for the future.

APPENDICES

Appendix I is a list of the constituencies sampled, along with the names and affiliations, if applicable, of the persons interviewed. Responses to the interview questions are summarized in the appendix.

Appendix II is a list of Task Force members.