Town and Gown Relations: What Colleges and Universities Can Do for Your Organization and Neighborhood?

Presenters:
 • Elizabeth Glenn, Dominican University, Biology Major
 • Leah Sweetman, Saint Louis University, Assistant Director for Service Learning
 • Patricia Zahn, University of Missouri – St. Louis, Director of Community Outreach & Engagement and the Des Lee Collaborative Vision
Community Engagement

Community engagement 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.

_Carnegie Foundation (2008)_

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.
Patricia Zahn
Director of Community Outreach & Engagement and Des Lee Collaborative Vision
314-516-5267 or zahnp@umsl.edu
HOW IT WORKS

“Education is the key to all of our hopes and all of our progress.”

-E. Desmond Lee

Faculty and staff

Students

Cultural & civic partner organizations

St. Louis Region
Responding to community needs while providing learning opportunities
Volunteerism, Service-Learning, Internships, Engaged Research, Philanthropy… annual, ongoing and one-time efforts

Community greening, cleanup, book drives, food drives, tax prep, making wishes come true…

Hundreds of students with university employees – thousands of hours
Building Partnerships in The Ville

Leah Sweetman
Center for Service and Community Engagement
314-977-4214
leah.sweetman@slu.edu
The Ville Neighborhood

• Saint Louis University has been involved in service activities in the Ville neighborhood of North St. Louis for many years.

• Built from existing strengths of the neighborhood, particularly faith-based organizations like St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church, which serves as a neighborhood hub and provides community guides.

• Students, faculty, and alumni serve on committees and boards of directors of the local organizations. Many engage in youth mentoring programs.
North St. Louis Initiative

- Bringing together University faculty with ongoing partnerships with community organizations in the North St. Louis area.
- Poster symposium to showcase partnerships that connects faculty, students, community organizations, local leaders.
- SLU, with its location in the City, Jesuit mission, commitment to social justice, and history of service to the underserved, is positioned to address disparities that exist in North St. Louis.

Mutually beneficial partnership is the priority

Working in North St. Louis by invitation
Elizabeth Glenn – Class of 2018
Department of Biology
Natural Science Major
Environmental Science Concentration

Can We Replicate the Plant Chicago Model
In a St. Louis Neighborhood?
What Is Plant Chicago?

• Urban agriculture model
• Circular economy enables adaptive reuse of resources, materials and supplies
• Indoor hydroponic and aquaponic farms
• Incubator for startup food businesses
• Research lab for scientists
• Historic preservation
• Catalyst for economic development
Why The North Central Corridor of St. Louis Can Replicate Plant Chicago

- Development of a sustainable agriculture model for an urban neighborhood.
- Waste becomes an opportunity to create a circular economy.
- Indoor farming grows local produce yearlong.
- Startup food businesses and a farmer market compliments one another.
- The value of science learning is a community contributor in an innovative way.
- A vacant building is repurposed to preserve history and cultural values.
- The model further enhances current economic development initiatives by creating education opportunities, local jobs and trade.

Stevens Alternative School

4200-4240 Finney