



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

OFFICE of THE PRESIDENT

April 9, 2014

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
51 Vista Lane
Stanford, CA 94305

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with pleasure that I write to you concerning Utah Valley University's reclassification for the Elective Community Engagement designation. Alongside Weber State University, UVU was the first institution in Utah to obtain this classification in 2008. Since this time, we have substantially strengthened the university's commitment to community engagement through the development of organizational structures, policies, and institutional programming. I will highlight a few of these developments below that exemplify our efforts over the past five years.

Core Themes

Among the first items of business when I began my tenure in 2009 was to identify core themes around which our institutional planning, budgeting, and university practices revolved. After several rounds of campus discussions, we decided on the themes of *engaged, inclusive, serious, and student success*. With attention to Carnegie Foundation language, we described the engaged core theme as follows: "*UVU engages its communities in mutually beneficial collaboration and emphasizes engaged learning.*" Our University Planning Advisory Committee (UPAC) reports directly to my office and is responsible for evaluating these core themes in terms of both curricular and community engagement. Furthermore, these themes set the agenda for institutional practices across all divisions including planning, budgeting, program development, assessment, and fundraising. As specified in the application materials, each year we carefully review and fund a variety of activities that speak to our community engagement mission.

Executive Leadership

I have also made key leadership changes in order to better align the institution with our community engagement orientation. First, I created a new executive position of *Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs - Engaged Learning*. This office is designed to provide university-wide leadership on academic engaged learning and in community outreach activities. The portfolio is designed to oversee the areas that represent the best practices in engaged learning including service learning, internships, international and multicultural programs, faculty development, undergraduate research, and others. This office also administers our flagship Grants for Engaged Learning Program, which provides \$400,000 of ongoing funding for projects that directly benefit the communities served by the university.

We also created the new position of *Director of Corporate & Community Partnerships*. With a split report between University Relations and Academic Affairs, this position facilitates larger scale institutional partnerships and develops innovative strategies to connect the university with the community. Specific responsibilities include 1) the campus-wide University Project for Civic Engagement, 2) the Public Service Academy in which students receive credit for projects completed in partnership with local government and non-profit organizations, and 3) the annual Social Summit, which convenes community leaders to address pressing social issues.

Finally, we created a new *Associate Vice President for Economic Development*, who oversees our new Business Resource Center (BRC). The BRC is among the best examples of university and community engagement. It is designed to leverage economic development opportunities appropriate to a regional state university and administers a variety of projects in partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, The Utah Science Technology and Research Initiative (USTAR), the Small Business Development Center, and the World Trade Center Utah to name a few.

With these and other positions firmly in place, UVU is on very solid footing to sustain and build our institutional commitment to community engagement across all university divisions.

Strategic Engagement Council

In 2013, my office formed a university-wide Strategic Engagement Council designed specifically to plan, strategize, align, and leverage our community engagement activities. Comprised of key university leaders, the council oversees activities related to two companion initiatives, the Business Engagement Strategy and the Civic Engagement Strategy. Each of these areas has component projects designed to advance the outward facing features of the university and provide for adequate input from our community and business leaders.

Planning & Budgeting

University budgeting and planning operates on an annual cycle through our Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment (PBA) model. All new funding requests and financial accountability information are presented to the entire campus for exposure and input. In addition, the rationale for all planning and budgeting must be justified in relation to the Core Themes. Thus, support for all institutional funding is directly connected to the ways in which campus endeavors further the engagement mission of the university. This process has allowed our institution to rally around, and focus on, the critical features of our institutional mission.

Academic and Student Affairs

Finally, another one our key strategies for institutionalizing engagement is to integrate targeted areas within the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions. Because engaged learning involves a meaningful relationship between curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, we have reorganized areas in which these relationships are most critical. For example, we brought multiple units together into a new Center for Global and Intercultural Engagement. This division is co-directed by the Associate VP for Engaged Learning and the Assistant VP for Student Success & Retention. This model allows faculty to work much more effectively with student support services to provide more opportunities for intercultural experiences in our local community and across the globe. We are proud of this model and are in the process of applying it to other key engaged learning areas across campus including Academic Service Learning and Internship Services.

In sum, Utah Valley University is deeply committed to the community engagement paradigm. Our institution has worked diligently over the past five years to institutionalize this model in ways that create sustainable, meaningful, and productive opportunities for our students to learn and serve in their communities.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Holland
President, Utah Valley University