

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: New Center to be Called Community Vitality Center, ISU
Date: January 6, 2003

Recommended Action:

Receive Iowa State University's report of a new Center to be called the Community Vitality Center.

Executive Summary:

Designed to Improve Iowa's Competitiveness	Iowa State University, through the ISU Extension Unit, proposes a new Center to be named the Community Vitality Center. This Center is being proposed to improve Iowa's competitiveness. To be competitive in the 21 st Century, Iowa must possess a strong agricultural economy and have vibrant metropolitan and regional commercial centers. Additionally, to fully reach its maximum growth potential, Iowa must have a vigorous network of rural communities that are aligned in meaningful ways so that their economic activities, human capital, social institutions, public services, and natural resource and cultural amenities make them attractive places to live and work.
Serve as Catalyst for Networking	The overall objective of this proposal follows a recommendation from the final report of the Governor's Strategic Planning Council, namely, "to develop a Rural Vitality Center at Iowa State University, to help foster the revitalization of rural Iowa." The Community Vitality Center will serve as a catalyst for networking among small and medium-sized rural communities. It will enhance the ability of ISU faculty and students, along with faculty and students from other Iowa institutions, to work in collaborative partnerships with community leaders and citizens from across the state.
Most Funding from Grant	The majority of the funding for the Center is from a USDA grant. A small portion (less than \$25,000) of a Director's salary (Professor Mark Edelman) is paid from state funds in this effort. The Center's existence will be contingent upon the continued funding from the USDA.

Board Questions
for New Centers
and Institutes

Attached to this memorandum are the University's responses to the
Board of Regents questions for new centers and institutes.



Robert J. Barak

Approved: 

Gregory S. Nichols

Community Vitality Center (Proposed)

1. What is the title of the proposed center or institute?

Community Vitality Center (CVC)

2. What is the administrative relationship of the proposed unit to other entities on campus, such as departments or colleges?

Iowa State University Extension is the designated fiscal and administrative unit for the proposed Community Vitality Center

3. To whom will the administrative director of the unit report?

The Director of the Community Vitality Center will report to the Director, Extension to Communities and to the Vice Provost for Extension of Iowa State University.

4. Succinctly describe the basic purposes and objectives of the unit.

a. How will the activities of the unit relate to the general mission and teaching programs of the university?

The Community Vitality Center (CVC) will serve as a catalyst for networking among small and medium sized rural communities. It will provide policy analysis, engage communities in dialogue, and foster discussion among rural and urban interests. More specifically, the purposes of the CVC include (1) identification of policy topics that are of concern to rural communities, (2) commission research to analyze the priority policy topics and examination of the differential impacts of public policy on rural communities and rural areas, (3) assessment of best practices, lessons learned and performance of alternative strategies to improve rural vitality, (4) development of collaborative public-private partnerships to engage rural communities and diverse rural and urban interests in dialogue and resolve Community Vitality concerns.

The mission of the proposed Community Vitality Center is consistent with the Engagement/Outreach Mission of Iowa State University. It will enhance the ability of ISU faculty and students, along with faculty and students from other Iowa institutions, to work in collaborative partnerships with community leaders and citizens from across the state to discover and learn new and current concepts by supporting applied research, scholarship and creative activity to address the problems and issues related to the vitality and growth of communities of the state.

b. How do they relate to the strategic plan of the department and/or university?

In general, the proposed Community Vitality Center (CVC) is designed to assist ISU and other Regents Institutions in achieving the items identified by the Board of Regents in its April 1998 Strategic Plan Concept: "The Engaged Institution." This is accomplished by improving the responsiveness to CVC clients and stakeholders, respect for partners in education, academic neutrality in serving as a resource, accessibility for all constituencies, integration of its mission

with its responsibilities, coordination among university entities working in concert with each other, and resource partnerships with government, business, and nonprofit entities.

The proposed Community Vitality Center (CVC) is designed to address the following specific strategies outlined in the ISU Strategic Plan:

Strategy 4 calls for understanding the Implications of Science and Technology by improving the understanding of Iowa Citizens in social, ethical, environmental and economic implications of science and technology. Some CVC activities will help ISU to develop extension and continuing education programs designed to enrich the technological literacy of Iowa citizens.

Strategy 5A and 5B call for expanding technology transfer by enhancing the economic and social value of ISU research and education through active technology transfer and to enhance the direct delivery of technical assistance and transfer through specific outreach efforts. Specifically, Strategy 5A, Sub-items 5 and 6, address working with state and local economic development groups, and providing seed funding for demonstration projects. The proposed CVC will potentially address elements of these items as well as Strategy 5B, Sub-items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. For example, the proposed first-year project collaborate with the Pappajohn Centers and the Small Business Development Centers to assess the local interest in developing rural community-based entrepreneurship programs and entrepreneur development networks.

Strategy 7A calls for Strategies to Advance Economic Development and Environmental Stewardship by enhancing and expanding ISU capabilities in research, education and outreach through a coordinated economic development effort and its related environmental and social impacts. Strategy 7A, Sub-item 1, calls for "establishment of organization foci for university wide coordination of current environmental and economic development activities. The CVC represents a university-wide activity with faculty from four colleges involved in first-year project proposals.

Strategy 7A, Sub-items 2 and 3, call for establishing a statewide Task Force to identify economic development needs and initiating a broadly-based strategic planning project for outreach programs. A Community Vitality Center Governance Board has been organized to assure broad involvement of community leaders, and established to conduct strategic planning and to provide guidance on issues and priorities of statewide concern.

Strategy 7A, Sub-items 5 and 8, call for organizing interdisciplinary teams, including Iowa citizens, to initiate a state-wide dialogue on community development needs and opportunities and key local issues and for developing and strengthening partnerships with local, state, regional, national, and international agencies and groups studying similar problems. The CVC is designed to involve Iowa community leaders and citizens in setting priorities and in implementing interdisciplinary statewide initiatives.

Strategy 7C is to design and develop a community-based strategy to address local environmental, economic, and social needs through targeted ISU research and extension efforts. The CVC will likely address Sub-items 1 and 2 calling for assessments of community service needs based on citizen surveys and statewide databases to identify opportunities for improved access to federal and state programs and establishment of university-industry community task forces to consider action projects to help achieve local economic and environmental goals.

Finally Strategy 8 calls for strengthening Human Resource Management and Professional Development. Specifically, the CVC will provide ISU faculty and students with greater opportunities to work with extension field staff and diverse community leaders from across the state on economic and developmental vitality issues. In turn, this will likely result in a greater sense of community by providing more opportunities for professional development and interaction among university employees and clientele.

5. Do similar units exist at other public or private colleges or universities in Iowa? If so, how does the proposed unit relate to them?

No similar unit is structured with neutrality to serve as a catalyst in fostering collaborative partnerships across all public and private entities and to facilitate access to expertise and to organize resources for addressing the community vitality agenda.

6. What are the proposed sources and annual amounts of funding for the unit? Please itemize. (Include faculty, staff, and clerical salaries; supplies; equipment; travel; other costs)

Budgetary Item	Source of Funds	Annual Amount
Community Vitality Center Projects	USDA	\$280,000
Director	ISU Economics Dept.	\$20,000

7. Which of the costs in item 6 represent new financial obligations to the general fund of the university?

None, a current faculty member serves as Director.