Fostering Partnerships Between Higher Education & EDOs

Universities as Economic Drivers: Measuring & Building Success

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Fostering Partnerships Between Higher Education & EDOs

Outline

- About IEDC
- Overview of the U.S. Economy
- Economic Shifts in 21st Century
- Impact of these Shifts on Economic Development
- Fostering Partnerships between Higher Education & EDOs
  → Overlapping Projects & Challenges to Collaboration
About IEDC

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is the world's Largest membership organization serving the economic development profession. We are dedicated to helping economic developers do their jobs more effectively and raising the profile of the profession. When we succeed, our members create more high-quality jobs, develop more vibrant communities, and generally improve the quality of life in their regions.
From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, our 4,600+ members include:

- Public state, regional, city and county ED professionals
- Chambers of Commerce and other business support agencies
- Technology development agencies
- Redevelopment authorities
- Educational Institutions & Non-profits
- Consultants
- Utility companies
Economic Shifts in the 21st Century
Key economic shifts in the 21st century:

- Globalization
- The Internet Boom
- The “Great Recession”
  ...high unemployment, record foreclosures, a tight credit market, and public budget crunch
- Shifting Energy Markets
- Natural Disasters
Impact of Shifts on Economic Development
Increase in challenges due to the negative effects of the recession & global shifts

These shifts have prompted the review of economic development strategic priorities & the role of the practitioner in the community
Over the last 4 years, our communities have been greatly hindered by:

- Lack of access to capital & financing
- Business closures & downsizing
- Declines in real estate development
- Budget cuts at state/county/local level
- Industry restructuring
- Lack of skilled labor
To be effective, today EDOs are focusing more on:

- Strategic Partnerships
- Business Retention
- Entrepreneurship
- Marketing (i.e., social networking)
- Renewable/Clean Energy & Energy Efficiency
- Regional Cooperation
Most notably, economic developers have gone from being pure industrial developers to more diversified practitioners dealing with similar challenges as business leaders in the guise of new technology & different jobs.
Like EDOS, many colleges & universities see themselves as community agents

→ tailoring research & teaching portfolios to meet the economic needs of the regions they serve

but, institutes of higher education have also been impacted by cuts to state & local budgets
These fundamental economic shifts call for substantial partnerships between institutions of higher education and economic development.
“Partnerships with universities have been crucial to my community’s stability... targeted collaboration can help to strengthen the economic base and foster the knowledge economy.”

Klaus Thiessen, President & CEO, Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation
Fostering Partnerships Between Higher Education & EDOs
Institutes of Higher Education & EDOs share common goals:

- Creating jobs
- Supporting entrepreneurship
- Attracting investment
- Nurturing talent

*The engagement between higher education & EDOs is essential for economic growth in today’s knowledge-based economy*
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Overlapping Projects

Higher education institutions & EDOs overlap on many projects including:

- Technology transfer
- Revitalizing surrounding neighborhoods & regions
- Entrepreneurship promotion
- Real Estate development
- Talent development
More than only commercializing innovations, institutions of higher education can stimulate economic development through:

- Programs where universities take the lead in redeveloping blighted neighborhoods
- Programs where business students are required to gain real-world experience by interning at local companies that need technical assistance
- Systematic engagement designed to identify and serve training needs within the local community
Example:

The Voinovich School of Leadership & Public Affairs at Ohio University - The Center for Entrepreneurship

An innovative, transformative program of job creation & real-world education for the next generation of entrepreneurs

→ Delivers entrepreneurial education, business assistance & capital resources in support of venture development in Appalachian Ohio

→ Runs the State-supported technology start-up program: *TechGROWTH Ohio*

* Staff & students in the MBA program provide technical assistance to start-ups & existing businesses in the region
In addition, many Community Colleges are committed to meeting the current and future workforce needs in “green” industries, as well as industries that are “greening” traditional occupations, such as manufacturing.
Challenges to Collaboration

- Complex university organizational structures can make it difficult for economic developers to know who to approach about forming partnerships.

- Most organizational structures vary greatly from one institution of higher learning to another.

- Gulf between the culture of academic institutions and economic developers.
Challenges to Collaborations, con’t

- The incentive systems that drive tenure and promotion within universities are impediments to increased engagement with EDOs.

Physical barriers: difficult to locate economic development offices on campuses.
Despite challenges, many institutes of higher education & EDOs are working together, as the panel will continue to demonstrate with their examples.

- One size doesn’t fit all – leveraging universities to stimulate economic growth depends on the conditions of the communities in which they are located.

- Successful programs grow out of sustained collaboration among economic developers, private-sector leaders & academic leaders.
Thank You!

www.iedconline.org
Questions?

Please visit our website at www.iedconline.org

IEDC's Presidential and New Congress Transition Document and Economic Stimulus Recommendations

The 2009 Federal Economic Development Agenda (PDF) is a set of policies intended to provide national leaders with recommendations critical to the economic development communities in the United States. The Executive Summary (PDF) sums up the recommendations offered in the Transition Document.

On December 18, IEDC and a team of economic development leaders from across the country were invited to meet with President-elect Barack Obama’s Treasury Transition Team in Washington, D.C. to provide recommendations for the new Administration’s economic stimulus package. Participating organizations included: the Association of Defense Communities (ADC), the California Association for Local Economic Development (Caledo), the Council on Competitiveness, the Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA), the International Downtown Association (IDA), the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), and the National Association of Development Companies (NADCO). The recommendations they provided are essential to shaping a viable economic stimulus package to lift the nation out of the economic crisis and meet long-term needs for sustainable development. These documents...