

# Building University/Community Partnerships “Dreaming New Dreams”

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## INTRODUCTION

Too often academics are accused of living in ivory towers and not being connected to the real world. Because of the very nature of our institutions we tend to be less guilty of this than those at large public and private research institutions. And yet with our heavy teaching loads, commitment to our universities and a tendency to give of our time and talents to our churches, community contact and involvement may move down lower on our priorities list than they should. However, given the expanding notion of scholarship (Boyer), we are in an excellent position to “dream new dreams” and be of greater service to God and man.

Currently many CBFA business faculty and our students, through various service learning programs, internships, and SIFE, provide an outstanding example of sharing our resources with the community. In recent years, the success of our type of institutions in national SIFE competition makes it clear that our commitment to the communities in which we live do not go unnoticed. On the other hand, there is still much more we can do to leverage our assets and resources. Our communities tend to be very generous with their time and money but I would argue they want to do even more for us and want us to do more for them. My experience, in a variety of both administrative and teaching positions over the last 25 years, has given me the opportunity to interact with hundreds of organizations. I’m convinced we are only scratching the surface of potential fruitful partnership opportunities.

One reason for this mutual under-utilization is that we tend to view each other in far too narrow of terms. We often see the business community as a source of potential students, internships, money, and maybe an occasional guest speaker. The business community sees us as a source of education, employees and as solicitor of funds from them.

This paper details in a “case-like fashion” how our business department through a combination of serendipity, good fortune and most certainly Providence has been able to expand our influence and contribution to the community beyond our expectations. We have established true partnerships that have opened our minds in creative new ventures.

## AN ACADEMIC CONTEXT: SCHOLARSHIP RECONSIDERED

Most Christian institutions such as those represented by the CCCU (Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities) and CBFA, in particular, are re-examining the role Christian institutions play in the Academy in contributing to scholarship. Most of our institutions position themselves as teaching institutions with lip-service to scholarship but very little tangible support. There has been considerable criticism of this reality by a number of Christian scholars including George Marsden (The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship) and Mark Noll (The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind). Indeed this lack of emphasis on scholarly work was the subject of two CBFA papers I wrote in the late 1990's. "Publishing or Perishing: Pressing Nineteenth Century Questions for the Twenty-first Century: the Role of Research & Publishing within the Christian College Context" and "Publishing or Perishing Phase II: An Empirical Study". In these papers I made a call for more aggressive work in traditional scholarship including "secular" journals. The empirical paper demonstrated almost non-existent participation in writing mainstream management conference papers and in top-tiered business journals. In the last 5 years, however, there has been a marked increase in scholarly activity as evidenced by the creation of two new CBFA journals. As more of our institutions have sought accreditation there has been both "encouragement" and "pressure" to engage in the more traditional scholarship forums.

At the same time, the 1990 landmark work of Boyer has opened up new conversations in the Academy as to the nature of scholarship. Boyer contends there are four types of scholarship that better reflect scholarly pursuits as it SHOULD be practiced. Boyer was the chairman of the Carnegie Foundation and reaction to his recommendations range from whole-hearted embrace to cynicism. Many faculty in teaching institutions have found a certain solace in the recognition of the important diversity of the work they do. More traditional research faculty, who have been schooled and indoctrinated in the "publish or perish" environment are justifiably critical and may see the Boyer model as a mere justification of faculty who have not made any substantial contributions to the literature in their fields of endeavor. That having been said, his work has opened up valuable discussions as to the proper roles of the professoriate. Ironically, at a time when we in the Christian Academy are finally getting on the publication bandwagon, the wider Academy is starting to consider the value of what we are already doing. Boyer's work defines four categories as illustrated in Table 1.

In this paper, I want to illustrate by four specific examples how have been able to embrace these four types of scholarship and DREAM NEW DREAMS through creative partnerships with business, industry and the community at large. By doing this we more fully embrace the spirit and practices advocated by Boyer that can lead to a more holistic approach to scholarship. At teaching institutions there is the danger of getting so busy in our commitments surrounding the classroom that we can start living in an isolated world. A message consistent with Boyer's work is that Ivory Towers, Bubbles, and Cloisters – cannot survive the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's demand for relevant scholarship in all of its many forms.

**TABLE 1 BOYER’S SCHOLARSHIP CATEGORIES**

<b>CATEGORY- SCHOLARSHIP OF...</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>EXAMPLES in the business field</b>
DISCOVERY	Traditional research- both review and empirical research that contributes to the literature base of our disciplines.	Journal articles that are peer reviewed or go through some sort of editorial review process. Academy of Management Journals, Economic Journals, Marketing Journals, Accounting Journals, books and monographs, and popular articles for the business press.
INTEGRATION	According to Boyer “The role of integration in scholarship is to recognize the place of ones own research in the wider body of knowledge and then to make connections across disciplines.”	Cross disciplinary integration of knowledge, integration of the theoretical and practical, the world of the academy and the real world of work. Cross-discipline courses, internships, partnerships with the business community to achieve various learning objectives.
APPLICATION/ COMMUNITY SERVICE	The application of knowledge to the betterment of the community and the world.	Service learning projects, community service projects, public service internships.
TEACHING	This type of scholarship recognizes the creative work that goes into mastery of knowledge and the effective presentation of this information so that others might comprehend it.	Creative teaching and assessment of the results to assure the relevance of process. Holding standards of academic excellence while at the same time employing creative cutting-edge technologies and techniques. Interacting with students facilitates the process.

## BACKGROUND

Olivet Nazarene University is located in Kankakee County, Illinois. Founded in 1907, it is celebrating its Centennial in the 2006-2007 academic year. Kankakee County has a population base of about 102,000 and is 50 miles south of the Chicago Loop. Like many northern industrial communities it has suffered significant economic setbacks over the last 30 years, losing thousands of manufacturing jobs. Until about 15 years ago the institution was virtually “separated” from the community, but under our current president a great deal of effort has been made to not only to be a good citizen but to actively engage the community. Olivet with its 2,500 undergraduates and about 2,000 part-time graduate students has a significant economic impact in our community. With an annual budget in excess of \$60 million dollars, (and based on a previous economic impact studies) it is projected that we have a total impact of over \$105 million annually. Each year our faculty, staff, and students donate thousands of hours of service to our community. We are on the threshold of new opportunities and in very tangible ways are practicing the four modes of scholarship advocated by Boyer.

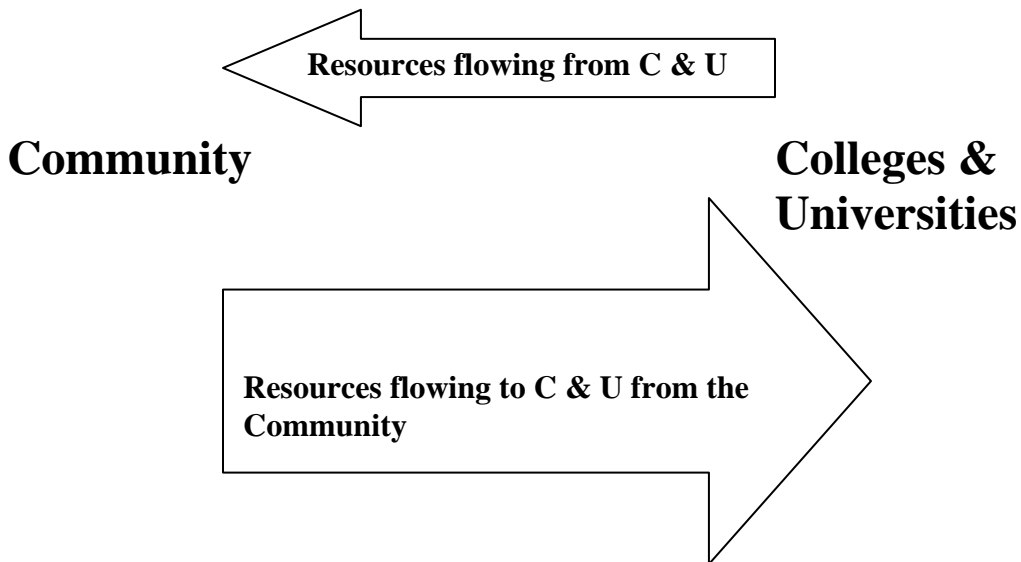
It is not unusual for colleges and universities to seek resources from their communities. Pfeffer’s (1978) work has suggested that organizations must be concerned about these relationships and resource dependency is an important consideration for managers and administrators. Development officers, public relation professionals, and university presidents spend much of their time seeking resources or inputs to supplement their income sources. Ironically in this realm the rich universities often get richer as illustrated by the recent donation of Al Dunlap (“chainsaw Al”) of \$10 million dollar to Florida State University and the announcement that T. Boone Pickens donated \$165 million to Oklahoma State University –primarily to the athletic program.

But in recent years CCCU colleges and universities have been seeking and receiving ever larger donations. While this is an encouraging trend, we need to carefully examine what it is we are giving back to our communities in terms of expertise, know-how, knowledge transfer, and community service. It is not the contention of this paper that we are not already making contributions to our communities. Table 2 lists some of the many things we already provide to our communities and what we expect from our communities. (Provision of quality graduates is not included here since that in fact is part of the core business we are in. Neither are the goods and services that our community provides to us listed since these business transactions are paid for). My argument is this has to be a two-way street, but too often we are abundantly blessed and we perhaps bless at a level below our capabilities as illustrated by Figure 1. Most land grant institutions and community colleges explicitly and purposely are mandated to offer services and expertise to the constituencies (taxpayers) that support them. In one sense, the major purpose of this paper is to encourage dreaming new dreams in maximizing our ability to share our expertise and talent with the wider communities in which we reside.

**TABLE 2 Contributions to and from Our Communities**

<b>What our communities offer to us beyond the normal economic transactions</b>	<b>What our colleges tend to offer beyond graduates</b>
Large gifts and financial resources	Internship programs
Sponsorships	Community service programs
Guest speakers	Participation on boards, in community events, and drives
Special discounts or promotions	
In-kind gifts	

**FIGURE 1 Relative Flow of Resources**



While Olivet in general has growing opportunities, ONU’s Business Department in particular has increasing opportunities to be both a service to the community and a recipient of the community’s generosity. The Business Department has six full-time faculty and an undergraduate enrollment of about 300 students. In 2001 the university created the Donald H. Weber Leadership Center. The purpose and intent has evolved over the last five years. A 1/2 time position was funded for the first three years, and now it funded at a ¼ time level. The mission of the Center has evolved and emerged over these years. The evolving purposes are summarized in Table 3. The Weber Leadership Center is both a place (a 2200 sq. ft. facility), but in a more important sense, a concept of community interaction and development. The university wants to grow the input of resources (the hand is out), but also desires increasing the magnitude of the output of

good works and service (the giving hand) beyond just providing graduates and spending money in the community.

**TABLE 3 EVOLVING PURPOSES & ROLES OF THE ONU WEBER LEADERSHIP CENTER**

Provide support and management of the 2200 square foot community room to serve the needs of the business and the wider community.
Develop programs that support the development of leadership skills of our students by interacting with businesses and other professionals both on campus and off-campus.
Support economic growth and development of the community by providing expertise and support to businesses, area chambers of commerce, legislative leaders, and so forth.
Seek out partnerships to provide creative interactive between our community, students and faculty.
Provide for the two way transfer of knowledge between the university and the business community.
Serve as a neutral arbitrator or catalyst for community action and community development.
Provide a forum for idea exchange between business, education, government and a variety of community organizations.

Over the last five years the Business Department, in conjunction with the Leadership Center, has been able to develop some rather unique and creative partnerships. I have featured four as illustrative of the progress we are making. We are convinced that Christian university business departments can be both a resource provider and a resource receiver. That is central to “Dreaming New Dreams”. We certainly have more to offer to the Business Community than they even know and vice versa.

**FOUR CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES**

**1. *B2B Illinois- A Regional Business Magazine***

Almost by chance, 2 ½ years ago I met a local newspaper reporter who was in the process of launching a new business magazine in our county and he wondered if we would be interested in some how contributing. It was to be a high quality magazine that features local business leaders and notables such as the State Treasurer of Illinois, Judy Barr Topinka, Illinois Senate Majority Leader Debbie Halvorson, and State Representative Lisa Dugan. Ultimately we were asked to create a monthly column “Ask the Professor”. It has provided a credible publication source for many of our faculty. It has opened up conversations and relationships with many political leaders. For example, these political leaders have appeared at the Leadership Center giving both our faculty and students access beyond what would ordinarily be the case.

It has been a remarkable boon to the reputation of our university and gives several of our professors a chance to share their expertise with the community. We have been able to contribute to the conversation on a wide variety of topics including corporate culture, customer service, economic development, reducing workplace violence, and many other topics. The magazine goes out to 4,000 business and professional people per month. Recently B2B was expanded to Will County with a mailing list of over 14,000 businesses. Not only has B2B benefited our university and Department, but as a bonus it has provided a writing outlet for our business and journalism students.

Publishing scholarly peer-reviewed articles is a difficult, time consuming process, albeit an important part of the professoriate. Writing a highly quality, practitioner based article is not only invigorating but has the additional satisfaction of knowing that the article is read by hundreds and even thousands of potential readers. This opportunity not only has given us a chance to contribute to the community but has allowed us the opportunity to integrate our knowledge and scholarship into the community. One interesting change we are proposing for the year 2007 is to partner and co-author articles with practicing business professionals. The benefits are obvious including more relevant articles, increased credibility, giving business people a chance to publish, and forging and strengthening partnerships with our business community.

B2B has grown and developed much faster than either the publisher or we had anticipated. We have had strong support from the B2B organization and this has opened many additional opportunities for growing this partnership. B2B's editor Andrew Wheeler states:

*"The partnership between B2B and ONU is an ever evolving relationship. At the onset, B2B provided an opportunity for internships for journalism students, and gave the opportunity for students to get published before graduation. We made a conscious effort to get the writing assignments built into the syllabus, hopefully giving real-world experience rather than subject matter that was somewhat theoretical. Another partnership is the 'Ask the Professor' series. ONU professors, such as economics and ethics professors, write articles with the goal of taking national business paradigms and applying them locally.*

*The partnership has evolved into a system where the journalism students will work with the photography students to produce full, ready to print features. We are poised to add design students, along with other disciplines, to further enhance the students' educational experience and get portfolio material for the students before graduation. We get great, energetic work and the students get real-world experience."*

**This Partnership Makes Contributions to the Scholarship of:**  
**DISCOVERY**  
**INTEGRATION**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

## 2. *Providing Expertise to the Community*

The relationship with B2B has strengthened our partnership with the parent organization, The Daily Journal. We are regularly called upon as sources for articles. Recently I and another professor were featured in an almost full page article on the state of the local economy. The Daily Journal also has launched an award winning Pod cast which three of our professors have been featured on. In addition, The Journal has provided over \$3000 of free advertising for business programs we offer to the small business community in cooperation with SCORE and the local community college's Small Business Development Center- SBDC. While the relationship between a college and the media is not unusual, the level of and depth of this relationship is quite remarkable. Across the years the Journal has given more than adequate coverage to sports teams. Matter of fact the ratio of sports coverage to more academic interests a few years ago would have been at least ten to one. With the growing relationship with the Business Department, the Leadership Center and the University, the Journal has greatly expanded its coverage and interest in the activities and expertise represented by university faculty and students. Below is a list of some recent manifestations that have grown out of this relationship.

- Regular monthly articles by Dr. Rebecca Belcher, a Fulbright Scholar stationed in Africa.
- A weekly column by Dr. Gregg Chenoweth, Dean of Arts and Science & Chair of the Journalism Department.
- Several Pod casts of business faculty featuring views on technology, small business, and the economy.
- Many of our faculty being cited for their expertise on a variety of community issues.
- Opportunities for journalism students to write articles and serve internships.
- Free advertising support for a number of small business programs.
- Frequently the staff of the Journal speak to our classes regarding issues ranging from writing to advertising.
- ONU and the Journal plan on cooperating on a marketing research study in the Fall of 2006.

**From the university's perspective this relationship has brought us many benefits both intangible and tangible including:**

- Opportunities for students.

- Exposure and opportunities for faculty to share their expertise.
- The opportunity to be good community citizens and give back to the community.
- Conservation of scarce resources (advertising dollars) allows us to serve the small business community with no or low cost seminars.
- Source of relevant guest speakers.

**From the perspective of the Journal they benefit by receiving:**

- ✓ Sources of expertise for reporters.
- ✓ Increased credibility for stories.
- ✓ Source of stories.
- ✓ Interns.
- ✓ Increased readership and interest in the paper
- ✓ Practical help with a marketing study.

According to Phil Angelo, Editor of the Journal

*“Someone once said that journalism is the first draft of history. I believe that journalists have the awesome responsibility of writing history's first account on dozens of subjects. That burden is even more important in small and medium-sized towns where the community newspaper will often write the only story of what happened.*

*Our coverage always becomes immensely richer when we do the research to find out what has happened in the past. This helps us put the present in context. Olivet has always been a vital source of that information. A good journalist never stops observing, never stops learning. You can say the same thing for a good academic.”*

There are additional media resources in the community that we are continuing to cultivate. Without a doubt, the extensive relationship we have with Journal has increased our credibility and access to these media sources to go beyond seeing us primarily as a source of sporting news items. We are frequently called upon to our share our expertise and believe this will grow.

**This Partnership Makes Contributions to the Scholarship of:  
DISCOVERY  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
TEACHING**

### 3. *SCORE- Opening Doors of Opportunity*

Over the last several years we have developed a strong relationship with SCORE- Service Core of Retired Executives. While this in and of itself may be unremarkable the scope and extent of this relationship has led to both district (state) and national recognition of our efforts and has opened doors to us that otherwise simply would never have been possible. These past three years we have been functioning under the umbrella theme ***“Diamonds in our Own Backyard”***. This campaign emphasizes the need to more fully explore and exploit local resources rather than always looking to the external world to solve community development problems. On a regular basis we provide no-charge workshops to the business community on a variety of topics including:

- Financial Analysis
- Listening to Your Business
- Starting Your Own Business
- The Four Imperatives
- Women in Business
- Access to Financial Capital for Women
- Marketing, Sales and Advertising
- Women in Politics
- ... and many more.

In addition to the business community, our students are invited to these workshops without cost and it gives them the opportunity to hear speakers that are cutting edge in their business practices. The Kankakee SCORE Chapter has received over \$12,000 in funding which we are using together for the advertising of our programs and providing free counseling to area small businesses. In addition this partnership has led to many other fine connections for the university including:

- The Chicago Field Museum
- State Representation Lisa Dugan
- Senate Majority Leader of the Illinois Senate, Debbie Halverson
- Representative Careen Gordon
- State Senator Gary Dahl
- Illinois Department of Human Resources
- Illinois Department of Commerce
- Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum
- U.S. Senators Richard Durbin & Barack Obama
- Congressman Jerry Weller
- ...and many more.

Perhaps the most notable accomplishment this year has been the creation of a Collaborative Partnership between Kankakee Community College, SBDC, SCORE, and Olivet’s Weber Center. What makes this outstanding is that we live in a community that is constantly bickering and fighting among themselves over jurisdiction, economic development, education, and on and on. As educational institutions we are viewed as neutral third parties and often are the only ones capable of bringing dissenting voices together. It is an awesome responsibility and wonderful opportunity. This Collaborative

Arrangement is now being held up as an example of how communities with diverse interests can indeed work together.

There is no doubt that within the Illinois SCORE District, Olivet Nazarene University has the best university relationship with SCORE of any chapter. A national SCORE project is now underway to find ways that SCORE might help train the next generation of entrepreneurs. The Illinois District and the Kankakee Chapter, in particular, have been asked to serve on this national task force to advise SCORE about some ways this might be done. In a more general sense, CBFA institutions need to consider exploring collaborative relationships with their local or regional SCORE offices. It can be a highly beneficial mutual relationship.

**This Partnership Makes Contributions to the Scholarship of:  
INEGRATION  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
TEACHING**

#### 4. The Chambers of Commerce- Natural Partners

Strong ties with the local area Chambers of Commerce have led to a Board position for two years on the Kankakee Chamber of Commerce which resulted in sponsoring several programs for our community and students. For example, we have sponsored a Political Boot camp for would-be candidates. As my term ended with one Chamber, I was invited to join the Bradley Bourbonnais Chamber. We are planning a Homeland Security Workshop and a “reverse trade mission” from several Consulates in Chicago to our community. Our university will be the primary host for the event and our faculty and students, key partners in this “world-class” event. The Chambers really do look to our Business Department to help them on issues from economic development to customer service.

**This Partnership Makes Contributions to the Scholarship of:  
INEGRATION  
COMMUNITY SERVICE**

#### Conclusion

*The biggest problem that we have at this point is that a critical mass has been hit and we have more opportunities than we can possibly exploit. What a wonderful problem!*

These partnerships and collaborative opportunities have demonstrated several key lessons:

- Ivory Towers, Bubbles, and Cloisters – are not allowed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! There are great opportunities that await us.
- The Business Community is often full of “*Diamonds in our Own Backyard*”- let’s start mining!
- It’s less about asking and more about partnerships.

- As a university we are viewed as a neutral third party and often are the only ones capable of bringing dissenting voices together. It is an awesome responsibility and wonderful opportunity.
- Honoring our Christian Faith as fully participating community partners should be a priority.
- The growth of resources is a two-way street. By giving more, we are receiving much more, not only in terms of financial resources but in important non-tangible ways.

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