

# Chapter 20

## Corporate–University Partnerships: The Outreach and Engagement Model

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### ABSTRACT

*Corporate-university partnerships have the potential to create a myriad of mutually beneficial and reciprocal outcomes that support a larger public good. Within the various expressions of engagement, this chapter situates the outreach and engagement model historically and politically in the United States (US). A case study of a successful corporate-university partnership in the US is provided and is analyzed using the tenets of community engagement. The discussion of the case features three lessons that have the potential to inform corporate-university partnerships in contexts outside the US. Finally, approaches for implementing university outreach and engagement in the Indian context are proposed.*

### INTRODUCTION

To thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, today's corporations and higher education institutions must consider themselves partners in the knowledge enterprise. No longer is the creation and application of knowledge the purview of any one sector. The synergy created through partnerships between

these two entities can be a powerful mechanism to co-create solutions on a local, national, and global level. Creating and sustaining mutually beneficial university-corporate partnerships through an engagement and outreach model is gaining attention in the United States and elsewhere (Mendel-Reyes & Weinstein, 1995; Musil, 2011).

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## **Objectives of the Chapter**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a basic understanding of how the concepts of university outreach and engagement can benefit industries by providing a holistic approach to corporate education in the Indian context. Since many readers may not be aware of developments in the concepts of outreach and engagement, evolution of these concepts in universities, in the US, will be described to give an overall idea of associated concepts and their relevance to universities and society. To do this, in the first section of the chapter we give a brief overview of the historical policy context that has shaped the university-corporation outreach and engagement model in the US. Once the larger policy context is established, the section concludes by briefly highlighting the core tenets of university-community engagement.

The second section of the chapter deals with the various practices that are followed in implementing the concepts of outreach and engagement. These practices are illustrated in the case of Virginia Tech's program of outreach and engagement in Southside (central southern) Virginia in the United States. This case gives an idea of how universities can help rural areas that are in economic transformation and have limited knowledge inputs. This case is then analyzed in terms of the tenets of engagement. Lessons are extracted on how outreach and engagement can effectively broaden the scope and coverage of corporate education. This may be explained in terms of boundary expansion of university scholarship and university jurisdiction and boundary-spanning roles.

The final section of the chapter discusses implications of university outreach and engagement in the Indian context based on the preceding discussion. What are factors to consider when implementing practices that are successful elsewhere? Observations and recommendations of a recent committee on rejuvenating and renovating

the Indian higher education system (Committee to Advise on Renovation, 2009) provides the basis for this discussion.

## **The Post-Industrial Economy and the University-Community Engagement Model**

The US has had relative success creating a higher education system that is multifaceted and serves a variety of purposes (Fallis, 2007). One way the American university has supported a general public interest is by maintaining relationships and partnerships with various elements of the broader community (Kezar, 2005). The organization and compartmentalization of community engagement activities in different university units has led to the development of differing concurrent conceptions of community involvement, outreach, and community and civic engagement. Engagement activities focused on social, political, and economic justice issues have primarily been emphasized as a pedagogical component of service-learning courses (Butin, 2008, 2010). Service-learning is a "course-based, credit-bearing educational experience that allows students to participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112). Engagement activities focused on economic development and industry capacity building have generally been conceptualized under outreach services (O'Mara, 2010).

The guiding theoretical basis of outreach and economic development programs does not necessarily share the principles underlying other forms of community engagement tied to curricular or co-curricular academic or student programs. The literature does, however, reflect an effort to link and overlap the principles of curricular and

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