
A Report on the Community’s Perception of Notre Dame’s Engagement Activity
The Office of Public Affairs would like to thank key collaborators in this community perception study. To begin, the support of Vice President for Public Affairs and Communication Paul Browne was critical in moving this engagement survey to fruition. Tim Sexton, Associate Vice President for Public Affairs and Communication, provided counsel, guidance, and enthusiasm that kept the committee on track. Encouragement from members of the Community Engagement Coordinating Council provided critical voices from both the academy and the community on the value of such an exercise.

The Community Perception Advisory Committee deserves many accolades for their consistent participation, creative insights, critical analysis, and collaborative spirit. The membership (listed in Appendix I) was drawn both from campus partners and key community collaborators, and each contributed toward a strong vision for conducting this important study. Particularly, co-chair of the committee, James Frabutt, Senior Advisor to the Provost, Concurrent Professional Specialist, demonstrated an added commitment to the project, providing valuable input on process, interpreting data and implications, and contributing to the writing of this report.

Appreciation also goes out to our collaborators from Vennli: Joel Urbany; Gary Gigot; Mary Claire Sullivan; and our primary liaison and partner, Lindsay Baxter. Thanks also to Deanna Childress from Notre Dame’s Department of Sociology, who quickly became involved to provide direction and expertise toward successful focus groups sessions, with key support from Jessica Brookshire in Public Affairs.

Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to the community partners and service providers who lent their names and reputations to this process. Without their trust in Notre Dame and their vision for enhancing our community through these kinds of efforts, the Vennli model would not have yielded the meaningful insights that are listed in the following pages. These include:

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS**
- City of South Bend
- St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce
- Northern Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA)

**EDUCATION PROGRAM PROVIDERS**
- Saint Mary’s College
- Holy Cross College
- City of South Bend Parks and Recreation Department

**COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS**
- Memorial Hospital / Beacon Health System
- Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center
- United Way of St. Joseph County
INTRODUCTION
In recent years, Notre Dame has redoubled its efforts to make its community engagement posture more strategic, responsive, and attuned to measuring impact. To conduct an assessment of the current community’s perception of ND initiatives, Jay Caapong, Director of Community Engagement, consulted with the Office of Public Affairs team, Jim Frabutt from the Office of the Provost, leadership from the Center for Social Concerns, and members of the Community Engagement Coordinating Council to nominate candidates and assemble a committee to guide the study.

Once composed in fall 2015, the committee quickly determined that measuring impact of faculty, staff, and student engagement should be done with an instrument and methodology that could be replicated at a later date. Several principles guided the consideration of various methodologies of data collection and analysis to create a stable baseline for future research:

- a) exhibit alignment with the project charter;
- b) show potential for replication at a later date;
- c) yield potential action areas for improvement.

The committee discussed these principles in light of a survey tool developed by a local company, Vennli, as well as other vendors. The committee decided that Vennli could deliver on the goals set forth in the project charter, and that its tool would provide an innovative means to measure community engagement. The committee played an instrumental role in designing, framing, and composing every element of the survey. Guided by the Vennli team, the committee surfaced the most important areas to examine via their survey methodology. The three survey areas identified were:

- Economic Development
- PreK-12 Education
- Engaged Learning

In total, 326 surveys were completed by community members, with an average response rate over the three distinct cases of ~21% (markedly higher than typical 1-3% rates), and an average focus group opt-in rate of ~62%. A diverse and broad range of survey respondents were solicited from committee members, including close partners, as well as one-time participants in an engagement activity.

RESULTS
Business responses suggest that ND has a positive reputation for attracting, developing, and retaining talent in the community, as well as sharing its expertise with local partners. Notre Dame’s reputation for demonstrating economic leadership and driving innovation was rated better than the 2009 study, but was still ranked in the medium range. Most participants agreed that ND successfully convenes partners around important issues, though business size seemed to make a difference in perceptions of approachability and strength of relationships on campus. Notre Dame’s engagement efforts among preK-12 educational practitioners enjoy a positive reputation for providing volunteer support, demonstrating leadership, being innovative, and sharing expertise with the community. Education respondents placed low importance on Notre Dame’s evaluation and assessment efforts, which was surprising considering the volume of measurement that occurs in various partnerships.

Nonprofit leaders highly ranked Notre Dame’s commitment of sharing expertise and innovation, providing volunteer support and community leadership, convening partners, attracting and developing talent, as well as evaluation/assessment support. In focus groups, nonprofit leaders expressed the positive impact that ND has on the community, and that ND should share this story more effectively.

Across all three cases, respondents ranked the goal of Poverty Reduction as a lower priority. Moreover, this factor seemed to make a difference in perceptions of approachability in two specific areas:

- a) exhibit alignment with the project charter;
- b) show potential for replication at a later date;
- c) yield potential action areas for improvement.

Finally, use the results to help define instances where ND should focus its efforts and resources, and other areas where it might play a supporting role. For instance, ND might consider its role in poverty reduction. If no particular role is defined institutionally, but a commitment in this regard exists at a department/center level or with another local provider, then the survey results suggest that ND better communicate how it will support those organizations working to reduce poverty.

SUMMARY
In total, 326 surveys were completed by community members, with an average response rate over the three distinct cases of ~21% (markedly higher than typical 1-3% rates), and an average focus group opt-in rate of ~62%. A diverse and broad range of survey respondents were solicited from committee members, including close partners, as well as one-time participants in an engagement activity.

1. Continue to exercise collaborative and innovative leadership in the areas of economic development, preK-12 education, and community service/service-learning.

2. Build upon a solid foundation of sharing expertise with the community through partnerships with staff, faculty, and students. While one-time efforts are appreciated, sustainability in partnerships is highly valued.

3. Continue efforts to attract, train, and retain talented faculty, staff, and students with an openness to the mutual benefit to the wider community.

4. Improve communication about approachability in two specific areas: Prepare a team of University liaisons to guide community partners with particular requests/ideas to appropriate departments or officials. Publish contact information to engage ND officials through social media, websites, and print material. Create/modify accessible mechanisms (website, social media, print, etc.) to communicate University-community engagement efforts and impact.

5. Discern the opportunities in the following areas, where survey responses were mixed:

- a) the appropriate level/role of University funding in partnerships;
- b) evaluation/assessment technical support for community partners;
- c) and using ND’s wide array of facilities to support engagement strategies.

6. Finally, use the results to help define instances where ND should focus its efforts and resources, and other areas where it might play a supporting role. For instance, ND might consider its role in poverty reduction. If no particular role is defined institutionally, but a commitment in this regard exists at a department/center level or with another local provider, then the survey results suggest that ND better communicate how it will support those organizations working to reduce poverty.
Community Engagement Report

BACKGROUND

The University of Notre Dame embraces its identity as a longstanding anchor institution in the local community. Specifically, one of the five institutional goals articulated by University leaders charges the campus community to “Engage in external collaborations that extend and deepen Notre Dame’s impact.” In day-to-day operations, the University’s budget allocations, classroom and research initiatives, and public leadership consistently demonstrate an institutional commitment to community engagement for the common good.

To measure the impact of these community collaborations, the Social Values and Responsibilities Committee of the University’s Board of Trustees first commissioned a profile of community engagement in 2004, demonstrating a desire to account for more than just economic indicators of University impact in St. Joseph County. The engagement report described the University’s contributions in the areas of community-based learning, community-based research, applied scholarship, professional outreach, direct service, and social action. The results were presented to the trustees in February 2005 by staff of the Office of the President and the Office of Public Affairs and Communications.

Later, in January 2009, the Office of Public Affairs and Communications, in collaboration with the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research, conducted a campus-based survey of over 105 participants in focus groups. The Center for Social Concerns (CSC) has, for many years, collected and shared community engagement data. The CSC has developed a series of research questions given annually to nearly 60 community partners to assess their perceptions of whether students have enhanced the capacity of the organization and how well students support those served by the organization. With a 99% return rate, the community perception of student impact on organizational capacity—and on the people served—is significant.

Over the past three years, three separate inquiries into community engagement provided diverse stakeholder input to improve the effectiveness of ND engagement. The investigations tapped over 400 campus and community-based individuals, resulting in a campus-wide Community Engagement Strategic Plan. Moreover, the Office of Public Affairs developed and implemented the EngageND database to enhance our ability to document community engagement and monitor its impact.

In this current initiative, committee members concluded that measuring impact of faculty, staff, and student engagement should be done with an instrument and methodology that demonstrate potential for replication at a later date. Deliberate attention to the need for a stable baseline for future comparisons was integrated into early committee discussions, and will hopefully make future assessments of effectiveness easier to conduct.

For instance, 419,000 hours of University service with 347 community partners were documented. Externally, most of the 105 participants in focus groups (in 2009) had positive feelings about ND as corroborated by an anonymous survey showing that 90% had a positive or somewhat positive overall perception, 7% had a somewhat negative perception, and 3% “didn’t know.” Most participants believed that the relationship between the University and the community was “improving,” especially among local neighbors. There was a general understanding expressed that ND is here to educate students, that it has a positive economic impact on South Bend, that it is a draw for tourism, and that it is the largest employer in St. Joseph County. The investigations tapped over 400 campus and community-based individuals, resulting in a campus-wide Community Engagement Strategic Plan. Moreover, the Office of Public Affairs developed and implemented the EngageND database to enhance our ability to document community engagement and monitor its impact.

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COMMITTEE COMPOSITION, MEMBERSHIP, AND PROJECT CHARTER

In fall 2015, Jay Caponigro consulted with the Office of Public Affairs team, Jim Frabutt from the Office of the Provost, leadership from the Center for Social Concerns, and members of the Community Engagement Coordinating Council to generate a list of candidates for the committee membership, including non-University members. Frabutt agreed to co-chair the committee with Caponigro, and after inviting members to join, the committee was formed and held its initial meeting on Oct. 20, 2015. A Project Charter was drafted in early November, and a timeline for the project was determined.

SELECTING AN APPROACH FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

There is no standard practice for a university to assess its engagement with the local or regional community (if they even do so), and institutions of higher education have used a variety of methods toward this end. Key informant interviews with community stakeholders, needs assessments, focus groups and listening sessions, and in-depth case studies are each valid ways to measure community-university engagement. The selection of a strategy to guide data collection and analysis was taken up as one of the first items of discussion by the committee. Several principles were set forth to guide consideration of various methodologies:

- **a)** exhibit full alignment with the project charter;
- **b)** demonstrate potential for replication at a later date (i.e., creates a stable baseline);
- **c)** yield potential action areas and points of improvement.

Within these parameters, committee members discussed the alternative methods of surveys, focus groups, and interviews, and opted to begin with a community perception survey conducted by an outside consultant. Joe Urbany, a faculty member of the Community Engagement Coordinating Council, recommended the committee consider a company he co-founded, Vennli. On Nov. 24, 2016, a subcommittee met with Vennli representatives to review their proprietary software and survey tool. Based on this group’s recommendation, the committee decided to consider the Vennli model, while reviewing other options.

In the end, the committee discussed various options and determined that Vennli could best deliver on the goals set forth in the project charter. Moreover, the committee felt that this would be an innovative way to measure community engagement. Vennli was open to adding to its standard survey package a few open-ended items to collect qualitative data and to gauge interest in a follow-up focus group, both additions that were important to the committee. There were two concerns about the Vennli approach:

- **a)** standard language used in Vennli surveys, typically used in market settings, focuses on customers and competition;
- **b)** potential perception of bias due to the closeness of the connection of the company to Notre Dame (i.e., company founder is ND faculty member).

Through discussion, both concerns were adequately addressed. Vennli, as it had learned in other engagements with nonprofit partners, could replace the emphasis on competition and competitive advantage with alternate terms. Regarding the second concern, it was made clear that we would be assigned a Vennli team member that would work with us directly and for the duration of the project; moreover, the standard survey methodology that Vennli uses with all clients minimizes bias since it is based on a standard protocol.

MEETINGS

The committee met 1-2 times per month from Oct. 20, 2015 to Aug. 30, 2016. Meetings occurred during the lunch hour, typically from noon until 1:30 p.m., and locations varied from the Main Building, Geddes Hall, and the Joyce Center.

METHODOLOGY
Vennli Survey Methodology

Survey Development—Defining Growth Cases and Choice Factors

One of the positive features of the Vennli approach (see Table I for a definition of key terms) was that the committee played an instrumental role in designing, framing, and composing every element of the survey. Guided by the Vennli team, the committee spent time surfacing the most important areas (growth cases) to examine via their survey methodology. The three growth cases identified were:

- Economic Development
- PreK-12 Education
- A theme focused on Community Service/Engaged Learning

### TABLE I: VENNLI TERMS DEFINED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Construct</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth Case</td>
<td>Growth case is the term Vennli uses to describe a narrowly defined area in which a client—in this case ND—seeks to grow its reach and impact, and better understand potential areas of improvement</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context Statement</td>
<td>A context statement is a short articulation of the purpose of the inquiry; it specifies the focus of the survey and what it seeks to measure</td>
<td>“Our goal is to increase the effectiveness of ND Economic Development activity in service to business leaders by improving our own efforts, as well as engaging collaboratively with other providers.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Choice Factors | Choice factors are particular descriptors or traits that survey respondents rate, indicating both how important the traits are and the extent to which they are associated with your organization | • Drives innovation  
• Shares expertise  
• Demonstrates economic leadership  
• Influences companies to bring business to the region |

The committee drafted a context statement for each growth case and then used an iterative process to name and refine a list of critical choice factors. Lists that the committee members had submitted before the meeting were weighed, and the committee combined and collapsed some factors and determined what others should be added to the list. As a final exercise, committee members ranked the choice factors from most to least important and submitted their list to Vennli. These were later compiled and shared with Vennli to better frame the survey.

Determining Survey Respondents

The committee attempted to create three separate lists—one per growth case—to prevent too much overlap or duplication of requests to individual survey participants. A diverse and broad range of survey respondents were solicited from committee members, including close partners as well as one-time participants. Public Affairs combed its database for contacts, and names were added to the list with the hope that it might land in the person’s box despite the predicted failure. For reasons particular to Vennli’s experience and distribution process, all AOL addresses were removed from the lists.

4 continued

Focus Groups

The Committee concluded that focus groups would be helpful to provide additional feedback on questions raised in the survey. In June 2016, the committee agreed that at least three focus groups should be hosted, and Deanna Childress, a Ph.D. candidate in Notre Dame’s Sociology Department, was hired to conduct the three separate meetings. Jessica Brookshire, Associate Director of Public Affairs, agreed to assist, and lunches were organized for participants by Public Affairs staff.

Questions were drafted for each focus group based upon key areas of interest following the initial survey. The sample consisted of participants who had indicated on the initial survey that they would be interested in participating in a follow-up focus group. These participants were emailed and asked to participate in a focus group on a designated date. Each of the three focus groups was held at the Robinson Community Learning Center from noon to 1 p.m., and lunch was served to participants during the interaction.

In each focus group, participants received a copy of the questions at the beginning of the session. During each focus group the facilitator introduced herself and the assistant moderator, who was taking notes during each session; welcomed and thanked everyone for their time; briefly explained the purpose of the focus groups; and provided some “ground rules.” These included: letting participants know they should do the talking, everyone’s varying opinions are welcomed, their personal identifying information would not be shared in this report, the session would be tape recorded, they had the option to request not to be recorded, and they could write responses on the copy of questions they were provided and give them anonymously at the end of the session or email them to the facilitator.

BUDGET

This survey and focus group consultants were financed by the Office of Public Affairs in the Division of the Office of Public Affairs and Communications.
A committee advising the survey implementation made an attempt to create three separate lists—one per strategy/growth case—to prevent overlap or duplication of requests. A diverse and broad range of survey respondents were solicited from committee members, including close partners as well as one-time participants in an engagement activity. Across the three survey cases, respondents provided meaningful insight about positive elements of Notre Dame’s engagement. Specifically, respondents associated Drives Innovation, Attracts/Retains/Develops Talent, and Shares Expertise with Notre Dame. The Vennli team interpreted these aspects to be particular strengths of Notre Dame engagement efforts, suggesting that the University should focus on solidifying these factors as core engagement areas in the future.

Conversely, across all three cases, respondents ranked the choice factor Poverty Reduction as a low priority. Moreover, the factor was not highly associated with Notre Dame’s engagement activity. This leads to the analysis that there is low community expectation for the University to significantly increase its efforts in the area of ‘reducing poverty’ at this time.

Alternately, if the University considers poverty reduction as a core value of its engagement activity despite community expectations, then these findings suggest that Notre Dame communicate this value. Similarly, Conveys Approachability was of lower priority to respondents in comparison to other factors. Of note, however, respondents often associated approachability much more with other providers than with Notre Dame. This suggests to reviewers that approachability might warrant University attention (in terms of resources such as personnel, expertise, or capital), though better communication might also be indicated. The advisory committee indicated it would probe this factor more in focus group sessions.

In total, 326 surveys were completed with an average response rate over the three cases of ~21% (markedly higher than typical 1-3% rates), and an average focus group opt-in rate of ~62%.

SUMMARY OF VENNLI SURVEY RESULTS

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

VENNLI SURVEY:
Respondents and Survey Findings

70 Respondents (17% of invitees)

Respondents were asked: “When thinking about how local institutions support economic development, to what extent do you agree/disagree with the importance of the following factors.” Five choices were provided for respondents: Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Agree; Strongly Agree.

The following table indicates the rating of the factors. In Vennli’s system, 80-100% is considered “High Importance,” while 60-80% is considered “Medium Importance.” In this case, seven economic development factors were rated highly.

Factors associated significantly more with Notre Dame than other providers were: Attracts Talent to Region; Drives Innovation; Develops and Retains Talent; Provides Volunteer Support; and Maximizes Potential of Facilities or Venues.

These results suggest that Notre Dame enjoys a positive reputation overall in its role of attracting, developing, and retaining talent in the community, as well as sharing its expertise with community partners. Notre Dame was also ranked strongly for Driving Innovation, and just cleared the high range for Demonstrating Economic Leadership (80%), important benchmarks for future surveys.

Two segmentation comparisons exhibited significant differences in rating the importance of one or more choice factors.

- Owners & Presidents/CEOs vs. Other roles
- Owners & Presidents/CEOs had overall higher scores indicating that business leaders are more likely than the average business professionals to respond more assertively/enthusiastically to partnership opportunities, and to value support and funding in a community partnership.

- Specifically, these leaders responded more than 15% higher on the importance of these factors for a successful partnership:

  - Conveys Approachability
  - Provides Volunteer Support
  - Provides Funding Resources

- Large Companies vs. Small Companies
- Smaller companies were nearly 20% more likely to value Convening Role for community.

With this information in mind, Notre Dame can increase the effectiveness of its economic development impact by expanding efforts to facilitate or support convening activities for smaller companies.

Respondents were then asked: “How would you associate these factors with the economic development efforts made by [PROVIDER],” where “PROVIDER” was alternately the City of South Bend, the St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce, the University of Notre Dame, or the Regional Development Authority.

In other words, the following table indicates how well Notre Dame was rated against the factors deemed highly important or desirable to business community participants.
FOCUS GROUP

The Business group consisted of 13 participants from a convenience sample. The following questions were asked of this group.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the impact of your existing partnerships with ND on the community and on your own organization?

2. What are some of the challenges you encounter in partnering with ND?

3. What could the University do differently to enhance collaboration with community partners?

4. In what ways is ND approachable or unapproachable?

5. What are potential ways to improve ND’s approachability, especially for smaller businesses?

6. What are the biggest growth areas for new and continued partnerships in the area of economic growth and development?

IN THEIR WORDS

“Notre Dame’s leadership under Father John and John Affleck-Graves as they relate to community and region are huge… Notre Dame can ‘convene’ and if we can get those opportunities to result in local investment then the ‘whole’ region will be stronger… case in point is Notre Dame/John Affleck-Graves’s direct involvement in the Regional Cities Initiative, followed by his commitment to chair the RDA… a fantastic example of Notre Dame leadership by example. There is absolutely no question, that when Notre Dame leads, everyone benefits!! Unfortunately, when [you’re] small, your voice and relevance [may be] lost in the grander plans and bigger voices.”

Local small business owner

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES (CODED)

The table below provides frequency counts documenting the number of times a particular theme was mentioned in the focus group data. In the business area, for example, financial investment was cited 19 times. The table further indicates the number of times that a given theme was mentioned in the context of a University strength, challenge, or area for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Suggestions for Improvement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convening</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Because categories were not mutually exclusive, total frequencies may not sum evenly.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Many participants agreed that ND is successful at convening people and businesses but these efforts could be improved. There also was an emphasis by several regarding ND being more visible in the downtown area of South Bend, and improving the condition of downtown South Bend to recruit and retain talent. Business size seemed to make a difference in approachability and strength of relationships—those from smaller organizations made comments implying ND was less approachable, but even those with stronger relationships with the University agreed with those sentiments.

CONCLUSION—ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

These results suggest that Notre Dame has a positive reputation for its role in attracting, developing, and retaining talent in the community, as well as sharing its expertise with community partners. Notre Dame’s reputation for demonstrating economic leadership and driving innovation was better than the 2009 study, but was still rated in the medium range. There was a disparity noted between large business owners and CEOs vs. smaller business leaders, with the former indicating a heightened value of approachability, economic leadership through funding projects, and contribution of volunteers.

Many focus group participants agreed that ND does a good job of convening people. And the focus groups confirmed that business size seemed to make a difference in approachability and strength of relationships—those from smaller organizations made comments implying ND was less approachable, but even those with stronger relationships with the University agreed with those sentiments.
EDUCATION RESULTS

VENNLI SURVEY: Respondents and Survey Findings
165 Respondents (14% of invites)
Respondents were asked: “When thinking about how local institutions support preK-12 education, to what extent do you agree/disagree with the importance of the following factors...” Interestingly in this case, factors were ranked in the medium or low importance categories.

The highest rated factors included:
- Demonstrates educational leadership (77%)
- Drives innovation (76%)
- Shares expertise (75%)
- Provides volunteer support (75%)

TABLE V: IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION FACTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Importance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates educational leadership</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drives innovation</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares expertise</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides volunteer support</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates approachability</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracts talent to region</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performs convening role</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides funding resources</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops and retains talent</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximizes potential of facilities</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aids poverty reduction</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports evaluation efforts</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attracts Talent to Region was the only factor associated highly with ND (83%). The other factors ranked as ‘medium importance’ were all associated more with Notre Dame than other providers. In other words, Notre Dame’s engagement efforts among preK-12 educational practitioners enjoy a positive reputation for Attracting Talent (83%), Providing Volunteer Support (77%), Demonstrating Educational Leadership (76%), Driving Innovation (75%), and Sharing Expertise with the Community (73%).

Of note, the Vennli team observed that respondents for the Education case were ~20% less likely to score a factor as highly as Economic Development case participants, but the reason for this discrepancy is unclear. Advisory committee members agreed to query focus group participants to determine if other factors should have been included that would have ranked as “highly important.”

As with Economic Development respondents, the factor Contributes to Poverty Reduction received a relatively low ranking of 57%. Education survey respondents also placed low importance on Maximizes Potential of Facilities or Venues (57%), and Supports Evaluation and Assessment efforts (52%). The latter was surprising when considering the volume and frequency of evaluation and assessments that occur through various Notre Dame partnerships.

Three segmentation comparisons were determined to be of interest to Vennli reviewers:
- Administrators and Directors vs. Teachers
- Early Childhood vs. Secondary/Adult Educators
- Administrators and Directors vs. Teachers

In this case, the “PROVIDER” was alternately Holy Cross College, Saint Mary’s College, University of Notre Dame, or South Bend Parks and Recreation.

TABLE VI: EDUCATION FACTORS POSITIVELY ASSOCIATED WITH NOTRE DAME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Notre Dame %</th>
<th>Other Providers %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attracts Talent to Region</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performs Convening Role</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides Funding Resources</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops and Retains Talent</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximizes Potential of Facilities</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aids Poverty Reduction</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were then asked: “How would you associate these factors with efforts made by [PROVIDER] to support preK-12 education?”
- Public Schools vs. Non-Public Schools (the latter includes nonprofit organizations that provide educational services, but are considered to be in the private sector)
- Notre Dame can utilize this information to determine whether the University should devote funding resources as part of its engagement efforts with non-public school organizations.

FOCUS GROUP

The Education Focus Group consisted of 12 participants from a convenience sample. The following questions were asked of this group:

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the impact of your existing partnerships with ND on the community and on your own organization?

2. What are some of the challenges you encounter in partnering with ND?

3. What could the University do differently to enhance collaboration with community partners?

4. What evaluation and assessment efforts are most useful and important to your organization and why?

5. What factors are important to support preK-12th grade education that we haven’t already asked about?

6. How is the use of ND’s venues and facilities beneficial for preK-12th grade education?

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES (CODED)

The table below provides frequency counts documenting the number of times a particular theme was mentioned in the focus group data. In the education area, for example, programs were cited 23 times. The table further indicates the number of times that a given theme was mentioned in the context of a University strength, challenge, or area for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Suggestions for Improvement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers/Mentors</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/Awareness</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment &amp; Evaluation</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venues &amp; Facilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Because categories were not mutually exclusive, total frequencies may not sum evenly.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Education leaders focused heavily on the need for longer-term volunteer and mentor relationships between Notre Dame and their school or organization members. Many of them suggested that the volunteers and mentors they did have were a great help but that they needed more of them. They also expressed the need for or awareness of a campus liaison as a point of contact. In terms of needs to support preK through 12th grade education that were not asked about in the original survey, several mentioned that supporting parents and families or having some sort of parenting initiative would be what they need most. The use of venues and facilities was either unknown or unimportant to many, but a few did mention that using ND facilities or being on campus in general would be beneficial for students.
CONCLUSION—EDUCATION

Notre Dame’s engagement efforts among preK-12 educational practitioners enjoy a positive reputation for providing volunteer support, demonstrating leadership, being innovative, and sharing expertise with the community. Education survey respondents placed low importance on evaluation and assessment efforts which was notable, considering the frequency of measurement that occurs through various ND partnerships. There was some disparity between administrators (more valued) and teachers (less valued) on this point, so it merits consideration in future partnerships.

Survey respondents indicated that Notre Dame is not perceived to be a major actor in reducing poverty in the community, though some focus group participants mentioned that supporting parents and families, or having some sort of parenting initiative would be valuable, particularly with poorer families. Public school respondents seemed to value this role for ND over their private school peers.

Education leaders in the focus groups stressed the need for longer-term volunteer and mentor relationships between ND and their school or organization members, and encouraged consistency and sustainability in partnerships. Many of them suggested that the volunteers and mentors they did have were a great help but that they needed more of this resource. Focus groups also expressed the need for—or better awareness of—a campus liaison as a point of contact. A suggestion was also made that ND undertake an advocacy role for preK-12 education, specifically around standardized testing and student evaluation.

IN THEIR WORDS

“Our partnership with the University has been what has allowed us to function in a lot of ways and overall has been very successful, but has required a lot of training on our part.”

“The idea is to form relationships, and you have to have consistency in forming those relationships, especially with that population that I work with.”

“Existing programs have been very good, but a more consistent partnership could be useful.”

“…it would be great to have some type of regular notice of things going on at ND and how we can collaborate with them.”
COMMUNITY SERVICE/SERVICE-LEARNING RESULTS

VENNLI SURVEY: Respondents and Survey Findings
91 Respondents (33% of invitees)

Respondents were asked: “When thinking about how local institutions impact the quality of life through community service and service-learning activities, to what extent do you agree/disagree with the importance of the following factors...”

Factors that were of high importance:
- Demonstrates community service leadership (96%)
- Shares expertise (93%)
- Provides volunteer support (90%)
- Demonstrates approachability (89%)
- Drives Innovation (87%)
- Performs convening role (86%)
- Attracts/recruits talent to the region (86%)
- Supports evaluation efforts (85%)
- Develops and retains talent (82%)

Respondents were then asked: “I associate these factors with the community service and service-learning activities of [PROVIDER].”

In this case, the “PROVIDER” was alternately University of Notre Dame, St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, Beacon Memorial Health System, or United Way of St. Joseph County.

Of the nine factors above, all were associated more with Notre Dame than other providers, with the exception of Demonstrates Approachability (62%). Providing Funding Resources and Contributing to Poverty Reduction were ranked in the medium range of importance, and Notre Dame’s association with these factors was low for both, at 60% and 42% respectively.

Similar to the Economic Development case, the Community Service and Service-Learning (CS/SL) case results relay that respondents are likely to be passionate members of impactful engagement partnerships. One hypothesis for high scoring in this survey area is the inherently high level of compassion and advocacy of respondents who provide services to underserved populations.

Attempts were made to differentiate among segments within the CS/SL case results; however, segmentation sample sizes were too small to utilize for differentiating by association scores. Conclusions for this case were therefore drawn using the aggregate population.
FOCUS GROUP

Nonprofit Focus Group consisted of 8 participants from a convenience sample. The following questions were asked of this group:

1. What is the impact of your existing partnerships with ND on the community?
2. What is the impact of your existing partnerships with ND on your own organization?
3. What are some of the challenges you encounter in partnering with ND?
4. What could the university do differently to enhance collaboration with community partners?
5. What are the biggest growth areas for new and continued partnerships in the area of service?

IN THEIR WORDS

“The University endorses, encourages, the sharing of its people’s talents. I’m impressed in the last 5-7 years, with the number of kids from the University that are sincerely involved in endeavors around the community. It’s not just faculty and staff, it’s the students and they are maybe required, encouraged to participate, but I’ve never seen it done begrudgingly.”

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES (CODED)

The table below provides frequency counts documenting the number of times a particular theme was mentioned in the focus group data. In the nonprofit area, for example, knowledge or awareness of events and programming was cited 19 times. The table further indicates the number of times that a given theme was mentioned in the context of a University strength, challenge, or area for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Suggestions for Improvement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/Awareness</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Because categories were not mutually exclusive, total frequencies may not sum evenly.

TABLE X: SERVICE/SERVICE-LEARNING FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Overall, nonprofit leaders expressed a great deal of support and positive impact that ND has on the community, but that ND should share this more publicly. A notable theme that emerged across all three focus groups was the benefit of ND students and faculty being involved with their organization in some form, whether as interns, employees, volunteers, or mentors. Surprisingly, a key point made by at least one participant in the nonprofit focus group related to educational initiatives—one respondent suggested that ND should lead efforts to improve the overall condition of South Bend schools. Like the business and education leaders, nonprofit leaders expressed the need for a campus liaison, a public directory and some sort of website with available service opportunities. Based on the overall results, it seems that having a campus liaison for these stakeholders would alleviate many of the communication, awareness, and approachability challenges expressed by participants in each group.
CONCLUSION—COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SERVICE-LEARNING

Survey results convey a high rating of Notre Dame’s commitment to sharing of expertise, volunteer support, community leadership, innovation, convening role, attraction and development of talent, as well as evaluation/assessment support. Respondents did not rank the University highly in the area of approachability, however. Nor did participants express the perception that Notre Dame contributes significantly to poverty reduction in the community. In focus groups, nonprofit leaders expressed the positive impact that ND has on the community, and that ND should share this more publicly. Participants pointed to the benefit of ND students and faculty being involved with their organization, whether as interns, employees, volunteers, or mentors. Nonprofit leaders expressed the need for a campus liaison or an easier way to navigate to resources, and also suggested some sort of website to be able to post or view available opportunities for service partnerships.

IN THEIR WORDS

“I’m so impressed by the humble approach to service, but I’d love for them to step up in terms of education and help drive innovation. Let’s turn SB schools into a Midwest destination for education.”

“…because the University is so big, if you have an idea, sometimes it does take a little bit of digging. You have to figure out who you’re going to connect with. Sometimes you’re wading through the weeds to try to figure that out. That’s not necessarily a fault of the university, but then I don’t know where to navigate.”
ESTABLISH A BASELINE

As noted at the outset of this report, there is a clear trajectory at Notre Dame not only to be engaged in and with the community, but to measure it as well. One advantage of the metrics that the Vennli approach yields is a quantitative baseline, offering the opportunity to reassess via a similar methodology at a later point. The potential of tracking our engagement patterns longitudinally means that we can accurately assess growth, change, and areas of improvement. Though we have not defined the exact timeline for a follow-up examination of ND’s community engagement efforts, the committee is unanimous that regular assessment should occur, as a means to constantly reshape and improve our efforts.

In this current study, the collective feedback gathered from diverse community stakeholders suggests that Notre Dame’s engagement in the following areas is perceived to be important and valued, and as a result, the committee offers these recommendations:

1. Continue to Exercise Collaborative Leadership
Notre Dame should continue to exercise shared leadership in the areas of economic development, preK-12 education, and community service/service-learning. However, while Notre Dame exercises this collaborative leadership, the respondents communicated the value of innovation, sustainability, and approachability in community partnerships, characteristics that received mixed results in the surveys.

2. Build upon Foundation of Providing both Academic and Nonacademic Expertise
Notre Dame’s wealth of staff, faculty, and students should continue to find venues to provide both practical and academic expertise in the community. Volunteer engagement was highly rated across surveys, and while one-time efforts were appreciated, sustainability in partnerships was highly valued.

3. Maintain Focus on Enhancing the Talent Pool
Given Notre Dame’s internal personnel needs, as well as the important benefit to the community, bringing high-quality employees and families to the area is highly valued. The University should continue its efforts to attract, train, and retain talented faculty, staff, and students with an openness to the mutual benefit to Notre Dame and the wider community.

CONSIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The study participants indicated a need for Notre Dame to improve its communication about the University’s engagement efforts in two specific areas:

1. Prepare a team of University liaisons to guide community partners with particular requests/ideas to appropriate departments or officials. Publish contact information to engage ND officials through social media, websites, and print material.

2. Create an accessible mechanism for learning about engagement activity and its impact. The word ‘clearinghouse’ was used to describe this sentiment.

Given the results of the survey, Notre Dame may also wish to consider the depth of its role in poverty reduction in the local community. Where a commitment in this regard exists at a department/center level, the survey results suggest that a more direct communication strategy is required to convey that University value.

In general, survey responses are mixed in the following areas, and open up the opportunity for the University to discern:

a) the appropriate level/role of funding in partnerships;
b) evaluation/assessment technical support for community partners;
c) and using its wide array of facilities to support engagement strategies.
INTERNAL
- Distribute summary report to key stakeholders within the University and invite feedback.
- Integrate report findings into strategic planning efforts within the Office of Public Affairs.
- Collaborate with the Community Engagement Coordinating Council and other campus partners to explore results and to explore practices that can be improved to enhance engagement impact.
- Identify specific changes to be made in resource allocation, policies, and staff responsibilities.
- Use this study as a way to delimit ND engagement and channel resources to those commitments of highest priority.
- Develop a one-page summary to share more broadly, with clear messaging.

EXTERNAL
The unique survey methodology employed by Vennli requires other institutions to be mentioned by name in the survey itself so they can be used as points of comparison. While in a business setting these institutions would be competitors, in our case we identified close collaborators and partners for each growth case. We actively sought their engagement and permission to do so, and committed to certain parameters of data sharing and follow-up regarding the overall findings.

Another advantage of engaging in this wide-ranging and systematic assessment is that it informs not only what ND does well, but areas where other partners demonstrate more leadership and expertise. Said another way, the results help ND to define instances where it should redouble effort and resources, and other areas where it might be more prudent to play a secondary/supporting role.

Finally, the committee recommends the following steps aimed at external partners:
- Share findings with external providers who participated in the study
- Publicize report findings to the broader public

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NEXT STEPS

Post report summary online at community.nd.edu
Host a report-back session to share summary and entertain Q&A

APPENDIX I: COMMITTEE MEMBERS
APPENDIX II: PROJECT CHARTER

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PERCEPTION
PROJECT CHARTER

OVERALL OBJECTIVE
Conduct a study of the community’s perception of Notre Dame engagement programs and activities that developed in response to the 2009 study conducted by OPAC and ND partners. Compare results to previous opinions of ND engagement around the areas of education, economic development, community leadership, coordination, hospitality, and commitment to the local common good. Use data to determine recommendations for course correction or areas for investment/improvement by July 2016.

ASPECTS TO EXAMINE
Has the perception of ND’s engagement activity changed over the past five years (openness, educational and economic impact, leadership per 2009 goals)?
Are current community engagement initiatives appropriate to the needs and opportunities as defined by key community stakeholders?
What role should ND have in the larger community, according to the community? What does the community expect of us?
What are other best practices of engagement from other local or regional institutions?
Do we use media attention to promote the community more broadly?

WHAT IS OUT OF SCOPE?
Employee community involvement that does not leverage University resources.
The impact of community engagement on promotion and tenure.
Employee/student feedback on engagement activity.

EXPECTED END PRODUCTS
Indicators of impact of University engagement
Perception of effectiveness of current engagement activity
Challenges presented to engagement efforts
Opportunities/other ideas for engagement
Internal survey/interview/focus group summaries and database, including an established baseline and metrics
Assessment of how community needs compare to University capability
Identification of existing leverage points that maximize impact
Target goals for next year’s five-year engagement plan