Business Connections Circle

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The Opportunity

How can the Faculty of Business better build a better connection with the business sector within Western Canada and within the community of citizens residing in the Okanagan?

The Process

The team members identified a variety of needs that represent the traditional "town" and "gown" as outlined in the table below. We did not attempt to articulate the difference between the needs for the new UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College preferring to lump these together. The justification is that the strategy to enhance business connections should reflect a common effort for the purposes of the initial vision.

The Construction of Community and University/College Needs

Community Needs	Bridging Strategies	University/College Needs
Full time part time workers		Placement of graduates
		Placement of coop students
		Part time jobs (all four seasons)
Business research		Research projects for students
		Research projects for professors
Career development for current employees		Course and program development to meet market needs
Career development for future employees		Ongoing research to predict trends in business education
A new set of choices for post secondary education for children living within the Okanagan		Provide excellence in teaching and curriculum development
Sense of Giving back to the educational field		Sponsorship and Fundraising
		Speakers
		Judges for Student Competitions
		Events

The Bridging Strategies

In order to bridge the needs of the community and the educational institutions, many of the needs can be bridged with an innovative approach. The criteria used for development of these strategies are:

1. Create an interactive relationship with the community of the Okanagan Valley
2. Maintain a high profile for both UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College
3. Match the needs of the community for education and research to the needs of UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College for teaching and research
4. Be timely and responsive to the specific needs of the business community within the Okanagan
5. Enhance the competitiveness of SME's ("Small and Medium size enterprises") and entrepreneurial activities

It is the recommendation of the Business Connections circle that the following strategies should be implemented:

To Bridge Needs for Workers and Needs for Student Placement

♦ Create one permanent student placement service and employer recruitment division for both UBC Okanagan and Okanagan college that serves needs of graduates for fulltime career jobs and students for part-time jobs
♦ Create more coop programs in all areas of education where academic credits are received for cooperative work experience
♦ Create a culture amongst businesses and organizations that coop students must also be paid for coop work
♦ Create a high profile business and community development centre through existing faculty and administrative staff across a diverse cross section of faculties for the business sector and the community at large to contact for its needs

To Bridge Needs for Business Research and Needs for Professional and Student Research

♦ Within the structure of the proposed business development centre for business and the community, aggressively market the student research needs to the community so as to enable a well orchestrated approach to planning and executing student research.
♦ As well create a student run research company (based on University of Calgary model) to provide students an opportunity to conduct real research under the guidance of a faculty advisor.
♦ Within the structure of the proposed business and community development centre, aggressively market the research skills and experience of faculty at both UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College

- Encourage and rewards faculty memberships in organizations critical to the identification of ongoing and future research needs for both faculty and students
- Encourage and reward community volunteer work to raise profile of both UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College

To Bridge Needs for Course Development for Employees and Needs for Course Development to Meet Market Demands

- Conduct regular research within the community to understand needs and communicate these results to all stakeholders at UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College
- Conduct regular research within the faculty and students of UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College to understand needs and communicate these results to all stakeholders within the community
- Create and maintain an ongoing educational intelligence system that assimilates the foregoing primary research and also collects relevant secondary information from other stakeholders and is made available to all faculties for their use
- Create and offer a menu for a varied academic year that operates on a 12 month basis as market demands so as to provide education year round as opposed to a fall and winter semester system

To Bridge Needs for Strong Educational Choices for Children and Needs for Excellence in Teaching and Curriculum Development

- Analyze the foregoing research and educational intelligence to ensure needs of children resident in the Okanagan are met
- Develop a formal advisory committee with local Okanagan school districts to enable bridge to be built with secondary schools using familiarization trips to these schools and to both UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College; marketing collateral and allowing for input into curriculum development

To Bridge Needs for Sense of Giving Back and Needs for Sponsorship, Fundraising, Events, and Speakers

- Aggressively develop a roster of community leaders and residents based on with skills, interests and experience
- Manage such lists through the proposed business and community development centre to enable a proper database of potential speakers, sponsors, volunteers, judges and concerned stakeholders
- Communicate such list throughout the institutions and provide easy access to all stakeholders

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