Social Innovation through University-Community Engagement

Paper Presentation for the
Network of Social Work Management
May 30, 2019 – Chicago, IL
Tracy M. Soska, Assoc. Professor/COSA Chair
Overview

• How and Why University of Pittsburgh evolved its community-engagement work – Social Innovation
• Understand opportunities and challenges for building community collaboration
• Practices and lessons learned on inter-disciplinary collaboration at campus and community levels
• Q & A
Evolving Social Innovation through Community Collaboration

• From Conflict to Collaboration – Pitt and its Oakland Neighborhood...or... the 800lbs Gorilla....

• Early Collaboration – River Communities Study

• COPC – Community Outreach Partnership Center

• Senate Community Relations Committee

• Academically-Based Community Engagement Committee

• Community Engagement Centers Initiative

• From a University in the City to a University of the City – Strengthening Communities is now a pillar
Community Collaboration

- Mobilizing University Resources to Address Community-Identified Issues
- Cultural Humility & Orientation to the Community
- Trust Building – internally and externally
- CEC Community Advisory Boards
- Collaboration – Internal and Community Advisory Boards
- Economic Engagement – Buy, Build, Hire
Interdisciplinary & Inter-professional Collaboration – internal work

• Strategic Pillars – Plan for Pitt
  • Strengthening Communities
  • Advancing Teaching and Research Excellence
  • Building Sustaining Infrastructure

• Internal Advisory Committee – the players

• Academically-Based Community Engagement and Senate Community Relations Committees

• University Service Mission to Enhance Teaching and Research Mission
Homewood CEC – Bridging the Past to the Future
Programs and Resources

https://cec.pitt.edu/homewood/programs/
Lessons and Best Practices

• It takes time to build trust – be in it for the long haul
• Campus is the toughest community to organize
• Building the internal dialogue and cultivating the external relationships - it takes work and time
• Mobilizing and formalizing the collaborations – managing dynamic tensions in any collaboration
• Cultivating the Collective Will
• Making and Sustaining the investment

Q & A  tsssw@pitt.edu