

Georgia Southern University

Digital Commons@Georgia Southern

Association of Marketing Theory and Practice
Proceedings 2014

Association of Marketing Theory and Practice
Proceedings

3-2014

Communiversities: A Unique Outreach Opportunity for Business Schools

Renee Fontenot

Richard E. Mathisen

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amtp-proceedings_2014



Part of the [Marketing Commons](#)

This conference proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings 2014 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

Communiversities: A Unique Outreach Opportunity for Business Schools

Renée J. Fontenot

Georgia College

Richard E. Mathisen

Kennesaw State University

ABSTRACT

Communiversities are a growing phenomenon in communities where public and private partnerships are formed to provide local economic growth and educational advancement. This research presents several case studies of communiversities in the United States and Canada. The individual communiversities are unique with respect to how they address the needs of local communities and the commitment of members of the partnership to serve the needs of the community. The term communiversity is derived from the partnership of educational institutions and local business and government entities to meet the unique needs of the city or area that they serve.

The objective of the research was to determine the feasibility of starting a communiversity in a southeast city. Interviews with local community leaders and existing communiversities were combined with onsite visits to determine how the needs of local communities were being met by these partnerships.

In each partnership there were varied combinations of involvement by local colleges and universities, technical schools, businesses, potential investors, government entities and grant opportunities. The traditional university led model of organized outreach and paternalism is replaced by organic structured models that though partnered with, they are not necessarily a university or college entity. The commonality to the organizations is their role in organizing local partners (universities, colleges, technical schools, public schools, businesses, citizens, and governmental agencies,...) to provide training, consulting, education and, where appropriate and feasible, facilities, to help foster entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship has had steady growth for over a decade, communiversities provide a gateway for citizens across a community to find the resources and assistance they need to explore and launch a business.

Business schools can play a valuable role as partners in communiversities. Communiversities are not necessarily embedded in a college or university. The range of communiversity programs varied from youth outreach through masters level degree programs; self-help/self-enrichment to full laboratories and workshops for production of finished goods. The variation of programs matched the needs of the community and the inputs of the partners. In each case there was significant opportunities for schools of business to guide efforts in developing new revenue streams and service to the local community.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Renée J. Fontenot (Ph.D. New Mexico State University), Associate Professor of Marketing, Georgia College, Milledgeville, GA renee.fontenot@gcsu.edu

Richard Mathisen (Ph.D. Michigan State University), Professor of Marketing, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA rmathise@kennesaw.edu

