

Cool Cities Growth Initiative

Initiative Name	Promote Student Volunteerism and Connect Students With the Community				
Description of Initiative	Fostering the creation of a formalized program, which supports the relationship of students with the community, could bring immense shared benefits. Students who engage themselves in the community are likely to “feel at home” and to have a stake in the community. This helps them to further themselves as citizens of communities and to make impacting contributions, acting in all capacities from tutors to firefighters.				
Action Type		Build New	X	Expanding Existing	Attract From Elsewhere
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer, 2005: Planning. - Fall Semester, 2005: Test programs. 				
Champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bill Coplin was mentioned by the MDA. - Local “ride the bus” transportation and student champion. 				
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small to moderate. \$25,000 to \$100,000. - Foundation or private donation for a major, popular band to test the James Gang model in Syracuse and recruit 1,000 student volunteers and generate 10,000 hours of volunteer work. - Assumes most of promotions would be donated, with word-of-mouth (viral) marketing playing a major role. - University marketing vehicles would be critical. See tactics. 				
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of local organizations interested in revisiting or increasing student volunteerism. - Number of student volunteers. - Number of student groups engaged in volunteerism. - Number of student volunteer-based activities. - Mix of student volunteers. 				
Model or Case Study References	<p><i>The James Gang</i> (in Iowa City) is a grass-roots, volunteer organization that seeks to foster “interdisciplinary community development, as well as innovation in the sciences, humanities, business and the local arts” by “helping people realize and share their own creative endeavors.” The James Gang has held dozens of events including monthly “potluck networks,” film showings, poetry readings, benefit events for non-profits, and annual Exodus music festivals. (Exodus is a weekend festival that benefits participating local artists.) One of their best known projects is the 10,000 hour show, through which they plan a mid/large-scale concert (featuring artists such as Ben Harper or Ani DiFranco). The price of a ticket? Tickets are not sold for money--the goal is to distribute 1,000 tickets to young people who each have completed 10 hours of community service, thereby completing a total of 10,000 hours of community service. The James Gang not only works to strengthen the fabric of the community through its works, it also is an inclusive organization, which is open to anyone who takes the initiative to join.</p> <p><i>Greater D.C. Cares</i> is another example of a student volunteer program, with 12 years of providing more than 100,000 volunteer hours a year to hundreds of community service organizations. The group provides volunteer opportunities designed to brighten the lives of adults and children throughout the Greater Washington area.</p> <p>Making it easier for students to connect with their new local environments and to know how to get around is critical for building a relationship with the region.</p> <p>The <i>UltraViolet</i> Loop is a joint venture between the UltraViolet Loop Advisory Board (non-profit) and the Port Authority of Allegheny County. The UltraViolet Loop is a public bus, which travels in a loop, connecting 10 of Pittsburgh’s top entertainment and nightlife destinations. The UVLoop runs Fridays</p>				

	<p>and Saturdays from 7 p.m. until 3 a.m. (every 30 minutes in each direction), which is considerably later than other forms of local public transportation. It does not stop outside of bars.</p> <p>The UltraViolet Loop may simply seem like a shuttle bus, but it is truly much more-- it is a transportational link, which allows students to get from the campuses to various neighborhoods, which they might not otherwise explore. Further, by using the UltraViolet Loop, riders can enjoy Pittsburgh's nightlife options, without having to worry about parking and/or drunk driving.</p>
Alternative Strategies	Many
Synergy with Other Initiatives	Strong
Marketability or Buy-in Potential	Strong
Risk Factors	Moderate to Low
Supporting Documentation	See case studies, above.
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a broader mix of programs to appeal to a broader mix of students (i.e. what appeals to foreign- born students, or black students or students from a particular area like New York City?). - Making the right connections on campuses. - Grass-roots marketing to make sure students know about the programs. - Creative incentives like the James Gang model outlined in the strategy documents (i.e. tickets to hot concerts that aren't for sale and only can be obtained by volunteering).
Tactic and Action Plan	<p><i>Student Volunteerism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and recruit program champion. - Review and refine objectives, success factors and performance metrics. - Benchmark James Gang program in Iowa and review other successful student volunteerism programs. What is working in Upstate? Who is driving those activities? Meet with them. - Develop a list of local organizations using student volunteers that want to expand their programs, along with a list of organizations that could benefit from using student volunteers. - Recruit a working committee that wants to help involve students in the region's communities and organizations. - Develop a list of student groups or student populations with which to start a dialog, acquire their input and better define their interests and ideas for working together. - Hold round-table discussions and one-on-one meetings to determine what some of the best activities are to start with and to identify activity champions. - Select two or three activities or events to start with, based on the number of quality champions available. - Solicit the necessary funding for these individual activities. - Engage and motivate students; build awards and recognition into the plan. - Monitor and track results for each individual event or activity. - Generate media coverage in local and campus newspapers. - Develop "thank you" letters and wrap-up event. Offer letters of reference and accommodation as a standard practice.

	Student Transportation This issue is covered under Tactic 4.6.
Notes	