Knowledgefest Summer Community Festival Booths

Outcomes:

The Knowledgefest Initiative (KI) formally launched its programming activities during the Summer of 2001 with a presence at Milwaukee World Festivals. While the eventual goal is to have a presence at all summer festivals, the initiative was in place for three (3) different exhibitions during this inaugural summer. The events where KI was represented were: African World Festival (African story telling), Mexican Fiesta (History of Mexican dance), and Indian Summer (Water Literacy displays). The following were produced:

1. Discussion with the President/CEO of Milwaukee World Festival regarding the Milwaukee Idea’s Knowledgefest Initiative. This discussion will lead to possible formal sponsorship of the KI by MWF in the next budget cycle (2003). A formal sponsorship would lead to a KI banner being hung at the entrance of the festival grounds in June, with it in place through the September Indian Summer finale.

2. A formalized network began to emerge for faculty and teaching staff to showcase their talents in the community. Several faculty members were involved at the three festivals, many of whom had never been to the festival grounds before. Each researcher involved in the festival activities expressed a desire to remain involved, and to solicit additional faculty for presentations.

3. According to surveys that were present at the KI booths, community members were very impressed with the information that they received. Most were unaware of the variety of research that UWM was involved in, and most had no idea that the research was applicable to their everyday lives. The most successful community involvement appeared to be at Mexican Fiesta where UWM faculty presence was heavily involved in their Education Day. Several K-12 students interacted with faculty exhibits throughout the day, and several faculty members made contact with parents and teachers to hold similar demonstrations during the school year.

4. A major outcome was to actually get the initiated started with programming activities. These initial outcomes will serve as a building block for visioning other activities and eventual outcomes for the next programming year.

Knowledgefest Fellows Program (pilot) 2001-2002

Outcomes:

This fellows program was piloted during FY 2001-2002. The mission and vision of the program was to connect community scholars with the scholarship and research of our university faculty on a short term project. These community scholars do not have to be connected with a non-profit or other organization, and are in residence for no more than twelve (12) months. A stipend is paid to the community scholar, as well as the faculty scholar. The outcomes requested are that of teaching tools (exhibits, taped lectures, oral histories, etc.) that are presented to our students, faculty, and community. Partnerships with other campus units were encouraged to assist with the launch of this activity.

1. Selected Sharon Adams, CEO/Director of the Walnut Way Revitalization Initiative to be the 1st Community Scholar in Residence, partnering with faculty member, Dr. Cheryl Ajirrotutu. A number of outcomes were produced by this dynamic duo:
Hosted Walnut Way/Boston University/UWM Leadership Symposium in Boston, MA (May 2002): Dr. Ajirotutu, Ms. Adams, and one community resident of Walnut Way led the UWM team to Boston for this weekend event. The focus of the event was on building community capacity. 193 local attendees took part in the symposium.

KI supported the creation of a traveling exhibit of the Walnut Way Oral History project. This exhibit is a learning tool for UWM students, UWM faculty, and the greater community at large. The exhibit was housed at 6 different community sites and the Golda Meir Library.

Supported planning initiatives for the 2003 “The Power of Place” conference.

Provided initial funding for the Harvard Pluralism Project, which connects UWM faculty, community fellow, and students on a mapping project that will reach 78 parishes, churches, mosques, and synagogues in the greater Milwaukee area. The community fellow, Sarah Harder, was paired with faculty member, Dr. Anne Hansen, of the History Department. The funding resulted in a K-12 curriculum focusing on world religions, co-sponsored with the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee.

Finally, the major outcome of this activity was to support the formal launch of the Knowledgefest Initiative, resulting in a baseline for future planning and initiatives for the 2002-2003 year.