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San Francisco Urban Institute
Strategic Planning Document
8/2/05

Mission:

The San Francisco Urban Institute provides opportunities for civic engagement and leadership development at San Francisco State University for students, faculty and community members. Through innovative courses, experiential learning, political engagement, participatory action research and direct services, we partner the resources and expertise of the urban university with the needs of diverse communities. Working locally, statewide and internationally, we cultivate strong leaders who will effectively advocate for full social, economic and educational inclusion and fully participate in the civic life and political processes of their communities.

A Vision for Civic Engagement¹:

Civic and political participation are more critical than ever before, as our urban university continues to build its national reputation as a destination campus for service learning, leadership development and civic engagement. The San Francisco Urban Institute and our partners share a concern about the future of the San Francisco Bay Area and the options it offers to our working class and minority students, many of whom come from the most disenfranchised communities.

Our mission is to bring faculty, students and specialized technical assistance from our premier urban university together with city and county agencies, nonprofit service providers, policy makers, other educational institutions, neighborhood residents, labor,

¹ The SF Urban Institute, the Office of Community Service Learning and the national American Democracy Project have adopted the following definition of civic engagement as proposed by Dr. Thomas Ehrlich and colleagues in *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*:

“Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” (Preface, p.vi)

“A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate.” (Introduction, p. xxvi)

business and planning groups to address the most critical social justice issues of San Francisco and the Bay Area: equitable access to education, economic and community development, affordable housing, nutrition and health, workforce analysis and preparation, urban environmental issues, welfare reform, poverty, homelessness, disability and violence.

Already a leader in Service Learning statewide, our goal is educational and social transformation in the local, state, national and global arenas. We offer innovative, interdisciplinary university courses through our Urban Curriculum, leadership development, civic engagement opportunities, participatory research, specialized technical assistance and capacity building delivered by a dynamic mix of world-class faculty, researchers, students and public intellectuals, engaging SFSU's nine colleges—education, the arts, the sciences, the humanities, health, the social sciences, business, ethnic studies and lifelong learning (CEL)--in fields as diverse as the intellectual spectrum of the university and the communities with whom we work.

Our students, faculty and community teams have co-designed and supported collaborative innovative initiatives in participatory democracy that have helped resident groups build affordable housing, created state of the art comprehensive neighborhood service centers, changed the face of child and family health and services and promoted access to education in this city through direct service, participatory action research and specialized programs.

San Francisco State University's SFUI partnerships educate and engage SFSU students, faculty and community for active, politically informed and responsible citizenship while we create pathways to hope and leadership development for the most disenfranchised people in the San Francisco Bay Area.

San Francisco Urban Institute
(from the Urban Institute webpage and historical documents)

Mission: (from website...)

The San Francisco Urban Institute (SFUI) is a research and action project of San Francisco State University. Our purpose is to bring together resources from both the university and the community to address the most critical issues of San Francisco and the Bay Area: economic development, work force preparation, urban environmental restoration, inner-city education and health, business and community development.

Mission (from Susan's document to Taskforce: 10/18)

“Our mission is to prepare and orient our world class faculty and students, bring faculty, students and specialized technical assistance from our premier urban university together with city and county agencies, nonprofit service providers, policy makers, neighborhood residents and planning groups to address the most critical issues of San Francisco and the Bay area: equitable access to education, economic and community development, affordable housing availability and development, child and family development, nutrition and health, workforce analysis and preparation, urban environmental issues, welfare reform, poverty, homelessness, disability issues and escalating violence among children in our communities.”

My guess of a summary of these statements:

1. *The Urban Institute exists to bring innovative responses to the most pressing social and economic issues of the Bay Area communities by collaboratively engaging faculty, students and community members in educational alternatives, applied research, and action projects.*
2. *after more reflection: The Urban Institute exists to foster the capacity of Bay Area communities to address complex economic and social challenges by collaboratively engaging faculty, students and the community in the generation, dissemination, and undertaking of innovative approaches to the challenges of the 21st century.*

Value Statement: (founding documents)

We believe that “shrinking budgets, growing poverty, immigration and race issues—the widening chasm between those people who can afford to live and be educated in the city and those who cannot --are daunting challenges to the city and its people as they face daily the challenges of joblessness, violence at home and in the streets, substance abuse, and academic preparedness. The San Francisco Urban Institute and SFSU believe that the people in our city are our future and we are deeply committed to the programs—in our community and on our campus—that will nurture their dreams and help them to realize their true potential.”

Strategies (from website)

We strive to create an environment that supports long-term economic stability by offering research, specialized technical assistance, capacity building and university coursework. SFUI projects are designed to keep at-risk students in school, attract minority students to universities, create jobs, assist with job training, foster gender equity in education and the workforce, address healthcare needs and promote peaceful resolutions to conflicts that stem from race relations and housing issues, as well as restore the environment.

Collaborative: The Urban Institute core strategy is to build collaborative projects that bridge the university to community-based organizations, businesses, and labor and city agencies while utilizing a research and action approach to understanding and improving the urban environment.

Interactive: We have established an architecture for success by designing and developing interactive programs, community collaborations and campus affiliations that facilitate in the exchange of information and ideas among Bay Area school districts, labor unions, business', and local, state and federal agencies.

Interdisciplinary: We sponsor an extensive range of programs and projects in fields as diverse as the universities educational range. Additionally, we engage faculty and students in our initiatives and are a recognized participant in many of the city's most innovative approaches to urban problems.

Action oriented: SFUI is not purely a "think tank," but also an "action tank," expressing the best traditions of an urban university long noted for its applied research, and service to its city and region.

	Impact: Why do we exist?	“theory of change”
	Address the critical economic and social issues facing Bay Area communities economic development, work force preparation, urban environmental restoration, inner-city education and health, business and community development	Applied research Action research Community initiated research
	Create jobs, assist with job training, foster gender equity in education and the workforce, address healthcare needs and promote peaceful resolutions to conflicts that stem from race relations and housing issues, as well as restore the environment. [L.P1]	Applying talents of a dynamic mix of world-class faculty educators and researchers, students and public intellectuals in all eight colleges “learning lab” Bringing the universities resources to bear on community issues
	Improve the quality of life for Bay Area residents -- Keep at risk students in school Attract minority students to universities Nurture dreams	Technical assistance Capacity development Information and idea exchange Student service/volunteering
	Creating community in which community residents can be allowed to reach their maximum potential and flourish. Education of San Francisco State students.	coordinates and promotes the incorporation of community service learning into the curriculum of selected San Francisco State University classes, Encouraging civic responsibility and social awareness as elemental components of higher education
	Create a community that provides support, services and advocacy for low-income, Cal WORKs and all student parents and their families so they may successfully achieve their educational goals. Promoting social and economic justice Fulfill the university’s urban mission:	strengthening the capacity of young people, parents, seniors and neighborhoods to take part in decision making processes that affect the quality of life in their communities skill development of indigenous community leadership Advocating for student parents in higher education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage diverse state of the art instruction • Foster student learning and enrichment • Prepare students, faculty and community residents for civic and political engagement 	Offering cutting edge university course offerings
	Respond to community need	Empowerment of student leaders
	Educational transformation	Public education
	Social change at the local, state, national and global levels	designing and developing interactive programs, community collaborations and campus affiliations that facilitate in the exchange of information and ideas among Bay Area school districts, labor unions, business', and local, state and federal agencies

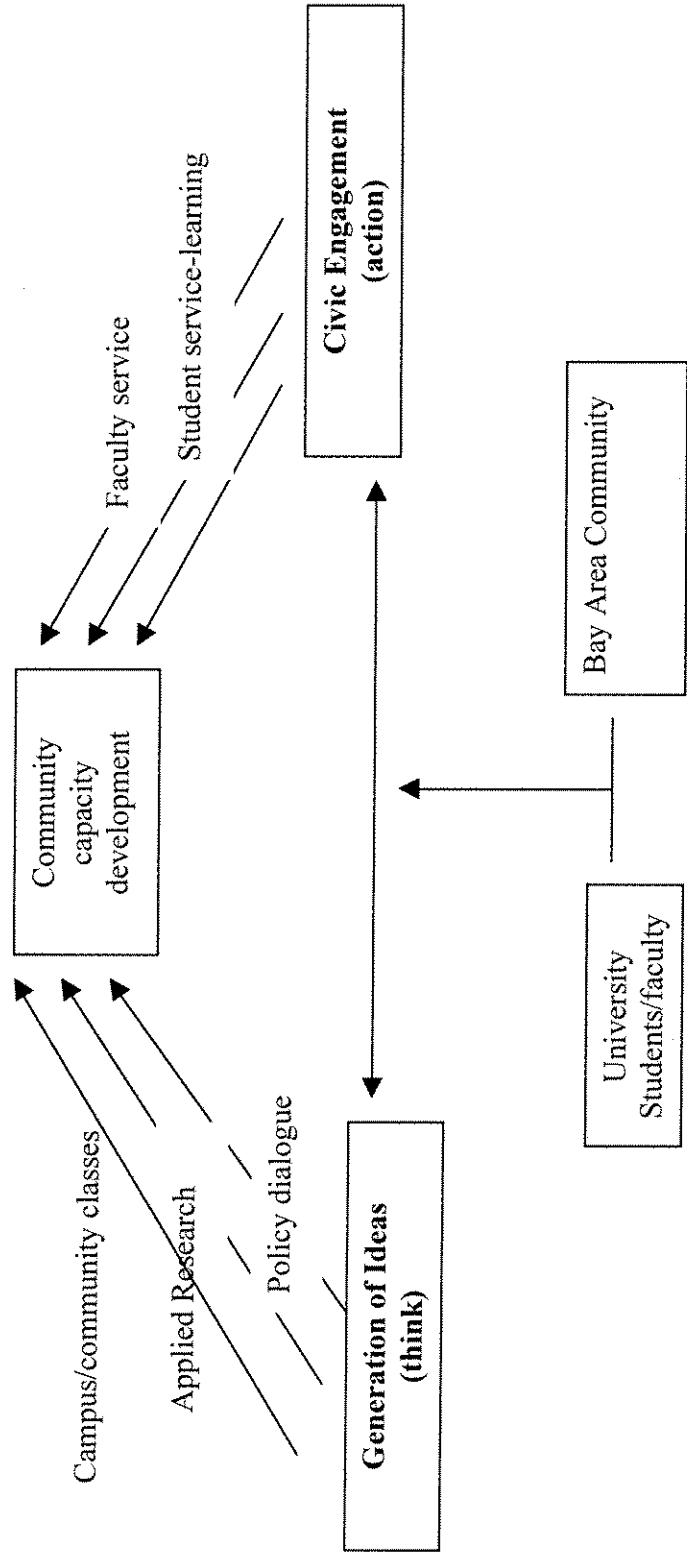
Note: this list was compiled from current website, program descriptions, founding documents, and current correspondence. Since some of these represent program descriptions, they may be less likely to represent the broader perspective of the Urban Institute.

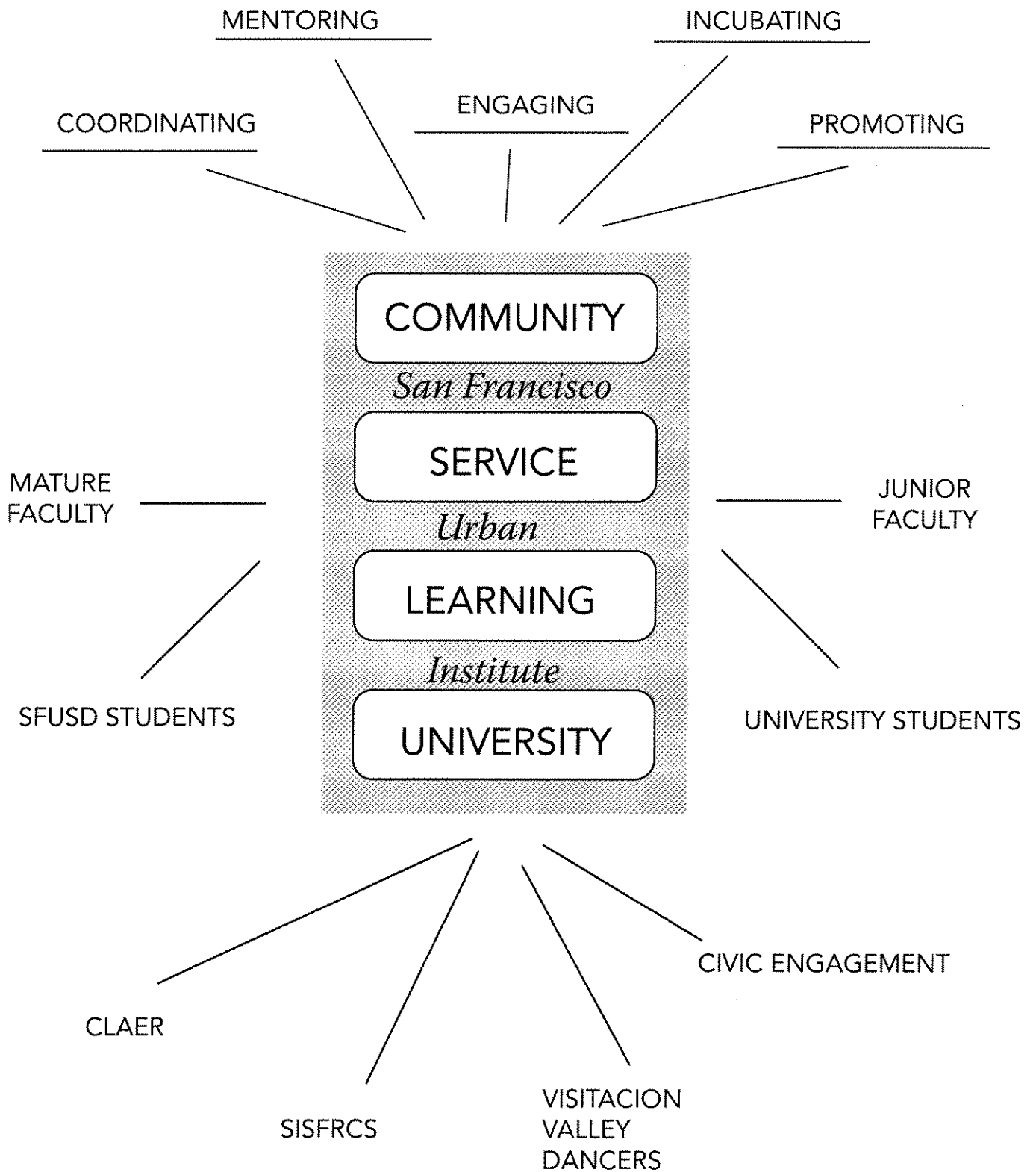
UI Infrastructure	"Information / Idea Business"		"Civic Engagement"	"Community Capacity I"
Research associate	Community Policy Dialogue	Applied Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-economic research Policy analysis Program evaluation 	On-going Programs	"Community Programs"
Fiscal Coordinator		Employment Projections and Expected Job Growth for Low Education Workers (2003) First Source Hiring Project (2004)	California Campus Compact	HEAD START
Office Coordinator	Brown Bag Luncheons (Fall 2003)	"Spatial Distribution of Family Income and Poverty" 2002 HSN Provider Survey (2001 and upcoming: 2005)	Office of community service learning	CLEAR
Publications Coordinator	Urban Curriculum "The politics of advocacy and community development"		Community Involvement Center	Stay in School Family Resource Center Americorps Volunteer Management Program
Comptroller	"The Politics of Development, Housing and Jobs"		America Reads	
Executive Director	Mayor's Policy "Chats"			

I think that the desired outcome of UI is ultimately development of “community capacity” that is achieved through civic engagement and generation and dissemination of ideas/information. I think for the Bay Area, the tone of the UI has always been capacity development and joint problem solving as opposed to an “elitist” imposed response.

If this is a correct perception, then I think that ultimately the questions become:

- Are we/how do we/can we incorporate these theories of change (civic engagement/ generation-dissemination of ideas) into our existing efforts. Eg: how do we apply these methods to our CLEAR project??
- Are these two “theories of change” in balance at UI, should they be? Can they co-exist? How?
- What strategies will it take to implement these “theories of change”? How do we prepare, support and involve faculty in such action/thinking? How we engage students? How do we bring community needs into the university?





based on a hand-drawn sketch by Mark Johnson at the SFUI strategic planning retreat 11/17/04.

THE URBAN INSTITUTE at SFSU

PLANNING RETREAT

November 17, 2004

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

- to capture the evolutionary development of the Urban Institute
- to develop reasonable clarity for its future directions
- to document in a plan: Purpose/Mission, primary areas of work, major strategies going forward, including funding strategies

PURPOSE OF THIS PLANNING RETREAT

- to capture the evolutionary development of the Institute
- to identify major strengths and weaknesses
- to identify major trends in the environment: opportunities, threats
- to identify what key issues/key strategic questions need to be addressed before setting future directions

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- to determine the process for developing recommended answers to the key issues/questions (who, what, when)
 - to determine how the pieces will be brought back together and synthesized in a plan (who, what, when)

Assets of the Urban Institute

- working across departments
- valuing of community, community service, community learning
- in community service learning, all involved are teachers and learners—community people, community organizations/public agencies, faculty, students
- enhancing curriculum
 - curriculum developed and delivered by/through Urban Institute
 - vehicle for faculty to teach and learn in the community and bring back into their curriculum
- educating students/faculty/university in applied/real/practical world
 - facilitate our students learning and knowing about the real world that they will go into
 - often out of their comfort zone—not in the traditional classroom
 - engaged in real world politically, socially
- connecting with SFSU graduates out there in real world, doing the work
- being University as good neighbor
- bringing students from community into post-secondary education who wouldn't otherwise come
- vehicle for the University connecting with a community that wants to collaborate
- responding to public perception that SFSU has urban mission
 - public wants/sees University as being involved where needs to for teaching, learning, research, working with others in its community beyond classrooms and departments
 - key to implementing this is Urban Institute:
 - its resources, knowledge, skills, connections, training, and coaching
- there are people who care about/value what UI values
 - President (still?)
 - graduates of SFSU in interesting positions in the community
 - some students
 - a few faculty
 - some professional associations
 - movement of “civic engagement”

Limitations

- UI hasn't been connected to SFSU except via Brian Murphy to the President
- no group like today's group that's strategizing, supporting, coordinating, helping, monitoring UI on ongoing basis
- UI has been operating under the radar at SFSU

Factors/Trends in the Environment

- at SFSU, real "urban mission" is not being articulated from the top down
- most/much of the University doesn't value what UI values
 - faculty
 - department chairs
 - RTP process
 - President (?)
- faculty are increasingly institutionalized
- community learning/community service learning is not part of the recognized/proscribed career track for faculty
 - "engaged scholar" not valued in professional development/tenure process
 - increased emphasis on research and publishing
- no longer the strong connection between the President and Mayor Brown
- time of major cutback in resources—in University, in community
 - emphasis placed on "financial sustainability"
 - away from general funds to other sources
 - have to recognize reality of this
 - produces feeling of being under siege
 - should be time of coming together to use strengths together
 - but more often response is one of pulling back
 - University retreating from earlier/real urban agenda

Critical Issues for the Urban Institute

- what is SFSU about? what does being “urban university” mean to SFSU? what should it mean?
- Urban Institute coming out from being under the radar at SFSU
 - needs SFSU “urban mission” to be explicit and valued
 - then, Urban Institute can be explicit and valued within that
- need to articulate what Urban Institute is about:
 - to University audiences
 - to community audiences
- to institutionalize UI have to politicize its value
- how be seen as helpful to faculty, departments, other institutes? less as a competitor? as duplication of what others already doing?
- Urban Institute be seen as “center of learning” that it is
 - and part of other centers of learning at the University
- University not retreat from urban agenda in this time of resource crisis
- expand and organize the UI base—including faculty who care, SFSU graduates who care, students

Some Philosophic/Strategic Options for UI

- be “realistic”
 - work with current more limited implied definition of SFSU urban mission
 - define, articulate & structure so works for faculty with emphasis on research, publish;
 - work with more limited resources:
- be “advocates/change agents”
 - promote value of community learning;
 - work/fight to get RTP process changed;
 - promote re-articulation of real urban mission for SFSU
- work outside the system/under the radar; be alternative to the established system

Some Near-Term Possible Directions

- try to find common areas of interest with others in the University—some faculty, some departments, some institutes
- develop support group(s) for faculty up for tenure with CSL/civic engagement emphasis to support in expressing value re. pedagogy, research, etc.
- organize the base of people who care about/value what UI values
 - President (still?)
 - graduates of SFSU in interesting positions in the community
 - some students
 - some faculty
- develop this group into group/board to strategize for UI, help oversee/coordinate/support implementation
- be clearer about UI's real capacity—given resources (staff, other)
 - can we deliver?
 - how does it look/feel to others? do they see/feel us delivering?
 - can we realistically build capacity? with SFSU graduates? philanthropic funding?

EMERGING IMMEDIATE PLAN

1. Articulate SFSU and UI linked purposes/missions
 - A. Assume University has real urban mission (to teach/learn in the urban community; to work with community on issues); continue to articulate this for SFSU
 - B. Articulate UI mission—with emphasis on how this serves University and faculty
UI Purpose (along the lines of)
 - established Center within SFUS and the community¹
to coordinate and promote:
 - expanding University’s engagement with the community learning and service
 - including continuing to incubate efforts that become institutionalized elsewhere
 - faculty building projects with the community
 - including, develop 3 success stories—short case paragraphs of faculty doing great work with/through UI, connecting back to pedagogy, research, etc.

(Urban Institute as conscience and champion of non-traditional classroom teaching and learning at SFSU)
2. Articulate that this is a time of transition for UI
 - A. PR—get messages out there
 - “there is now a team working with UI (folks here today + others)”
 - “organizing and expanding UI’s base” (see below)”
 - “developing strategies to better connect with faculty, to better coordinate in times of scarce resources”
 - B. PR with faculty
 - simple questionnaire/communication to faculty using the 3 success stories (see above) and surveying them if interested in similarly opportunities for themselves/their department over time

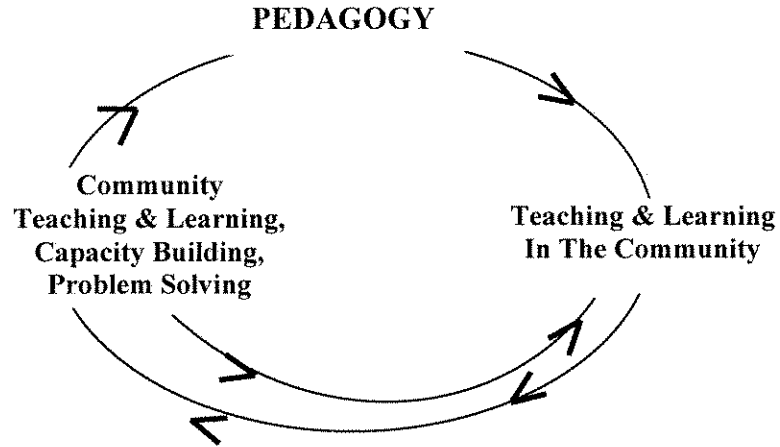
¹ graphically describe UI—all the elements and connections within University and then out to community and back in to University

3. Organize UI's Base: to articulate and defend UI ; to act on with UI over time
 - A. get organized in event need to "go crazy" to defend UI
 - compile list of advocates
 - ask people who've work with UI to write letters—about how served them in pedagogy
 - have Brian Murphy mobilize President to re-articulate support for basic mission of UI
 - B. Set-up group to monitor and strategize about the Task Force process
 - get and disseminate information on Task Force: who, what charge, what questions asking of whom
 - get copy of results from data gathering by the Task Force
 - provide Task Force information from #1, 2, 3B above
 - organize response to Task Force recommendations as needed
 - C. Set-up group to convene SFSU grads and plan greater involvement by them
 - involvement in immediate efforts
 - greater involvement over time with UI and University
 - D. Set up group to develop plan for supporting faculty connections to community work (mature faculty supporting younger faculty)
 - implement support group immediately for community-engaged faculty up for tenure
 - develop plans for strategies such as:
 - having faculty release time slots
 - mentoring young faculty
 - facilitating across disciplines
 - continuing work to influence/change RTP process
4. Bring in some new non-General Fund resources

Addendum

As a faculty person working with/through the Urban Institute in the community

It's all about:



faculty & student involvement *comes out of* curriculum



goes into



community work (projects, research, etc.)



*impacts faculty, students, and
public/community agencies' staff, clients,
wider constituency*



goes back into enriched curriculum

- have tended to measure and articulate the benefits/impacts to the community
 - and haven't measured and articulated benefits/impacts to faculty, staff and especially the curriculum