Urban Communities Valued

By D. Craig Taylor, Executive Director

The University of Minnesota has long served the community in multiple ways: by educating people of all ages and backgrounds, advancing the sciences through state-of-the-art research facilities, and providing programs and resources that help build stronger, healthier and more economically vibrant communities.

There is amazing talent and extraordinary resources at the University that we can utilize to support community revitalization and produce tangible and transformative outcomes in our urban areas. BCED exists in order to leverage these existing resources and talent to create programs/services that build real value across Minnesota’s urban communities.

We know we have only scratched the surface in understanding the many ways we can utilize the University to be an economic driver in our inner city areas. We also know that there are countless community stakeholders who would like to contribute or partner with our Office to help make our community a stronger and healthier place. Please don’t hesitate to contact us because together we can build a better future.

Amanda Koonjbeharry has been BCED’s Community Health Initiative intern since September 2013. Amanda was born and raised in Minnesota and is the first generation in her family to be born in the United States and to pursue higher education. Her parents are from Guyana, South America, and identify as Guyanese (West Indian). Amanda grew up in Farmington, MN and moved to Savage, MN prior to starting kindergarten. She attended high school at Prior Lake, MN and did PSEO at Normandale Community College.

Amanda attended the University of Minnesota for her undergraduate degree in Family Social Science and graduated at the age of 19 with her bachelor’s. She then took a year off and worked full-time at Resources Inc. with its Employment Action Center (EAC) as an Employment Counselor, and Housing Specialist who worked with families enrolled in the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

In 2010, Amanda started the Master of Social Work program at the University of Minnesota School of Social Work while continuing to work at Resources Inc. Her work experience paired with her academic training enabled her to see the effect that policies and procedures had on the lives of the families with whom she was working with. This understanding fueled her passion to pursue her Master of Public Policy from the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

Amanda’s anticipated graduation date is May 2014. Along with working at BCED, she works as a Planning Analyst at Hennepin County’s Human Services and Public Health Department. Her passion for helping others and creating change will continue to be the driving force of her professional career.
Community Technology Initiative offers $50 computers

The Community Technology Initiative recognizes that the digital divide is prominent in the Twin Cities metro. To help fill the gap, BCED offers computers for $50 (laptops $80), which includes the tower, monitor, 1 year warranty, keyboard, mouse, and Microsoft software. Low-income families, individuals, and nonprofit organizations are able to participate in our “Empower your Future with Technology” campaign through the Refurbished Computer program if they fit the following requirements: meet income guidelines, complete an application, provide proof of income and mailing address, and attend 3 free computer classes. If individuals do not meet the income guidelines, they are still able to purchase a computer for $120 and a laptop for $150.

To help support our refurbishing program, BCED takes donated computers that aren’t being used to supply the demand for refurbished computers. As a Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR), we will properly decommission your computers by following the government data-wiping standards of the Department of Defense and will also issue a Certificate of Destruction if requested. Instead of ending up in a landfill, the refurbished computers will be dispersed to disadvantaged communities that need access to the benefits of technology that they currently cannot afford.

For questions, please contact Wilson Maceno at 612-624-3778 or wmaceno@umn.edu.

Business Accelerator Program

A new cohort for the Business Accelerator Program launched on February 13, 2014, with a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement at the kick-off event. There are 10 teams participating, comprised of a Business Advisor, Business Owner and Graduate Student Assistant. This six-month dynamic business advisory resource paired businesses poised for growth with successful entrepreneurs in the community to coach the business on how to build capacity and improve efficiency and profitability.

Following the pairing of the teams, all participants engaged in a strategic workshop titled “The Business Model Canvas” to help organizations conduct structured, tangible and strategic conversations to move beyond product-centric thinking, and towards business model thinking. The businesses participating in the Business Accelerator Program are from diverse industries, making the round-table discussions especially compelling. In addition to face-to-face meetings, the program includes a workshop every month facilitated by a subject expert. The workshop presented on February 20 was facilitated by Stephen Beise, a strong executive coach with over 20 years experience helping organizations with strategy, management, and execution capabilities. The purpose of the workshop was to explore working relationships within teams to identify actions to maximize effectiveness. The workshop received tremendous reviews from all attendees.

The next workshop, scheduled for March 20, will be facilitated by Gary Cohen, author of Just Ask Leadership: Why Great Managers Always Ask the Right Questions.

Business Development Services offer management and technical assistance to small businesses through workshops, customized training and direct coaching support. The hands-on “Linkedln for Business” and “Social Media” workshops conducted in the computer lab have been greatly received.

For more information about the Business Accelerator Program and other Business Development Services, please contact Diane Paterson at pater050@umn.edu or 612-624-3578.

Community Health Initiative 2013 Summer Internship Program

Community Health Initiative (CHI) Student Consulting Projects had another strong showing in the nonprofit health community. We placed 15 graduate students from the following schools to work in community-based nonprofits across the Twin Cities:

- School of Public Health
- Humphrey School of Public Affairs
- Carlson School of Management
- School of Nursing
- Organizations hosting CHI Interns included WellShare International, The Center Café, Neighborhood Health Source, Kaleidoscope Place, American Indian Cancer Foundation, Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency (MVNA), and Rapp Chiropractic.

Spring 2014 projects are currently underway with new organizational and student experiences. CHI Student Consulting Projects are available during Fall and Spring semesters for full- and part-time University of Minnesota graduate students. A stipend is paid to each student upon the successful completion of a consulting project. Qualifying nonprofit organizations and businesses include those located in the greater metropolitan area, serve economically disadvantaged areas and communities of color, and are in the health care or medical industry.

The Community Health Initiative is a unique effort that focuses directly on communities that face public health disparities and other socioeconomic issues. This initiative is a direct result of a partnership between Medica and the University of Minnesota’s Office for Business & Community Economic Development, which is committed to advancing the quality of life for Minnesota communities.

For more information about the CHI Community Internships or Student Consulting Projects, please contact Nedy Windham at windh003@umn.edu or call 612-625-2053.
The Management and Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) for Nonprofits strives to improve the quality of life for Minnesota’s urban communities by enhancing the performance and effectiveness of community-based nonprofit organizations. BCED offers this unique program as a service to link nonprofit organizations to students, faculty and other resources at the University of Minnesota.

MTAP has 3 components: Technical Assistance - utilizes students and faculty to provide management and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations. Convening - provides symposiums and seminars that focus on topics such as best practices, nonprofit politics, funding, and team building. Coaching/Mentoring - provides leadership and development training for board members, nonprofit executives, and key employees within their organization.

MTAP has produced over 100 student consulting projects for nonprofit organizations across the Twin Cities metro. Over 175 University of Minnesota graduate students have participated in the program. The variety of the organizations that apply for MTAP provides our student consultants with many great ways to gain diverse knowledge and skills, while enhancing their community outreach experience and applying classroom knowledge to real-life situations.

MTAP has also sponsored symposiums and workshops on the Nonprofit Economy, Nonprofit Leadership & Board Governance, Nonprofit Fundraising, Nonprofit Evaluation and Google for Nonprofits. Results have included organizations building capacity and structure, organizational assessments and executive director, staff and board leadership development. Participating organizations have included: human services, housing, youth/teens, seniors, disability, educational, employment & training, community centers, economic development and health.

Project requests have included: fund development, human resources, feasibility studies, program development & evaluation, market research & analysis, marketing and communications, business plan development, strategic planning, finance & accounting, nonprofit management and IT/web design.

For more information on MTAP, visit diversity.umn.edu/bced or contact Nedy Windham at windh003@umn.edu or 612-625-2053.

MTAP for Nonprofits Celebrates 10 Years!

Starting February 2014, BCED is introducing access to The Central Certification (CERT) Program as a newly available tool for seeking small, minority, and woman-owned businesses for University of Minnesota departments to utilize. This CERT database is currently the largest in the state, with over 1,900 listings. Funding from Associate Vice President of Auxiliary Services, Laurie Scheich, provides the first full year of access for free to University staff and faculty.

The CERT Directory is now located on the BCED website Resources tab to provide an opportunity to achieve supply chain diversity goals. It not only supports the growth of local Targeted Businesses (women/minority/disabled owned business enterprises - WMDBEs), but also demonstrates good faith efforts for Targeted Business inclusion. Local business support creates an economic impact across the state.

Because the University cannot certify businesses, it must rely on designated third party agencies for that task. The CERT Program is a multi-government collaborative, including the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and Hennepin County. CERT’s centralized web-based vendor outreach system creates a “one-stop shop” for verifying certification. CERT outreach partners include the Midwest Minority Supplier Development Council, the Women’s Business Development Center, the National Association of Minority Contractors, and the Association of Women Contractors.

The CERT Program seeks to promote market growth, increase competitiveness, and create jobs among participating businesses, as well as to improve the quality of life for area residents. Together with BCED, CERT makes participation in the AIR (Awards, Incentive, & Recognition) Program, Targeted Business Program, and overall supplier diversity even easier. Contact Nick Schicker for any questions at nschicke@umn.edu or call 612-625-8460.

Success Story

University of Minnesota Gains Access to CERT

Anne Archibald was born and raised in Northfield, Minnesota. She attended Northfield High School where she participated in several student groups such as an all-girls Autism Awareness group, a Junior Board of Directors, and the National Honor Society. During her summers in high school, Anne made and sold baked goods at her hometown's farmer's market every Saturday. Anne is still an avid baker and continues to bake for her roommates and friends at the University of Minnesota.

As a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, she hopes to pursue a major with three different concentrations: Spanish, Educational Psychology, and Teaching English as a Second Language. Anne would like to pursue a career in adult education and human development. Her internship with BCED, as an assistant teacher for the computer classes held at UROC, has made her realize how much of an impact a teacher can have on students, and ultimately, the community as a whole. She has been teaching at UROC since October and really enjoys the challenging, yet rewarding, work she faces.
UpNet Technologies

Founded in 1996, UpNet Technologies is an experienced data transformation service provider delivering innovative technology, healthcare, integration, supply chain, and client solutions. UpNet’s fast to deploy platform connects, collaborates, and provides control of the information flow ensuring that you will meet your business objectives and business partner's expectations.

Jennifer Amys, Founder and CEO, has a successful track record of driving complex ERP and technology initiatives within Fortune 500 companies. Amys holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Taiwan.

Vicki Crowley, Founder and VP of Product Strategy, is one of the pioneers of electronic data exchange with prior experience implementing electronic commerce at GE Information Services for a myriad of Fortune 500 clients. Crowley is an expert at creating "usability" versus "technology" driven solutions that expand productivity and business efficiencies by simplifying complex work processes.

UpNet Technologies designed and developed iEDeX™ (Information Enterprise Data Exchange™), a SaaS (Software as a Service) based data integration and transformation platform with the ability to integrate any type of data, regardless of the origin of the data. This dynamic solution is successfully advancing the speed of data conversion, partner integration and access to global business analytics, enabling companies to create customized business solutions to fit their entire business needs, a certain project or even a specific process, while bringing significant value to their competitive advantage and bottom line.

The primary value drivers for iEDeX™ are flexibility, reliability, service, and cost. There are separate layers of security: communication, infrastructure, and application. Within the communication layer, the security design includes all the security protocols, intrusion detection, and maintains all security patches. Within the infrastructure security is a firewall, DMZ zone, and maintenance for all operating system security patches. The data center is hosted in a commercially secure facility with controlled physical access. And the application levels are divided by both application and account-user security layers.

The Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA) named UpNet Technologies as the recipient of the 2013 Tekne Award in the Software category. The Tekne Awards recognize companies, innovations, and people for technological breakthroughs that improve the lives and futures of people living in Minnesota and all over the world. UpNet is a certified member of the Minnesota Minority Supplier Development Council (MMSDC) and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC). UpNet is also a Microsoft and IBM Certified Business Partner. To learn more about UpNet or download any case studies, visit http://www.upnettec.com/