Community Partner Breakfast Welcome
July 11, 2013

On behalf of Weber State University I welcome you to this Community Partner Breakfast and I thank you for all you do to engage our students, staff and faculty in the art of community-engaged learning.

Our Center for Community Engaged Learning (or CCEL, as we affectionately call it now) is the newly renamed unit formerly known as the CIC. If you imagine a Venn diagram of the university's three core themes (access, learning and community), CCEL lies in a sweet spot nestled in the overlap of the circles of Learning and Community. I’d like to recognize Brenda Kowalewski and Mike Moon for their outstanding leadership of this organization.

The major importance of community-engaged learning, in my view, is that it provides an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to work done in the context of the community outside the classroom. For those of you who may be familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning, application is one of the six levels of learning, and it helps students to reinforce learning by discovering how knowledge can be used outside the context of formal instruction.

No university can participate in community-engaged learning without developing valuable partnerships in the community, and that’s why we are grateful to you all for participating in this valuable activity.

To give you an idea of how much community-engaged learning has become a systemic part of learning at Weber State, I’m going to give you a few facts and figures to illustrate the size and scale of the enterprise here. These come from the CCEL Annual Report for 2012-13, which is hot off the presses.

A total of 7905 students (32%) and 81 faculty members (9%) participated in CCEL activities this past year. Together, they contributed 147,921 hours of community service. The majority of this activity was performed as part of a CBL course, but some was in the form of pure community service hours or was contributed by the 105 AmeriCorps student members on our campus (which earned them $178,450 in scholarships).

Based on the feedback that we get from students, we know that they “get” the value of community-based learning and they understand the value of community service to becoming productive, contributing members of society. This past weekend I was in Philadelphia with 34 other university presidents, who “get” the value of community engagement for their campuses. We know that you all “get” this, too, and we are delighted to have you as partners in this important aspect of our university mission.

Thanks again for all you do, and Go Wildcats!