

William M. Plater 2002 Interview

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"Their vision and dedication were contagious," he said. He then set about developing an admittedly ambitious plan "to build a culture of service at IUPUI that not only was implemented within 2 years, but with institutional funding in place." The plan launched IUPUI as a model for institutionalization of civic engagement and service learning, especially in the area of faculty roles and rewards.



Dean Plater on Institutionalization



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- Establish the effort in academic affairs;

Indiana Passes Service Learning Resolution

The House of Representatives of the Indiana General Assembly votes that the institutions of higher education in the State of Indiana... *endorse service learning as a central vehicle for campus-community collaboration and of engagement of these institutions, and as an important pathway for student learning and for nurturing lifelong citizens.* —House Concurrent Resolution No. 32, February 5, 2002.

Institutionalizing service learning is usually approached at the level of one campus at a time, but key outside institutions can also have an impact. For this reason, Indiana's unprecedented passage of a resolution supporting service learning quickly became a topic of discussion among service learning advocates nationwide.

The existence and language of the resolution are primarily attributable to the efforts of John Brown, Associate Professor of Economics at Purdue University. He explains that "the idea was suggested by Harry Brown, Executive Director of the Center for Public Service and Leadership."



JOHN BROWN (LEFT) AND HARRY BROWN (RIGHT) WITH THE HOUSE RESOLUTION.

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Some of Dean Plater's suggestions for other chief academic officers (CAOs) working to institutionalize service learning are:

- Establish the effort in academic affairs;
- Appoint a well-qualified, committed, enthusiastic person to direct the effort;
- Create a resource center, such as the Center for Public Service and Leadership;
- Expect students to create a demand for faculty work;
- Include graduate students, as many will go on to be faculty members;

- Exploit external resources for funding, information, and training support;
- Build in sustainability with long-term budget commitments;
- Emphasize the importance of reflection;

- Make service visible, with clear roles for the President/Chancellor, the CAO, and faculty leaders.

“Above all,” he says, “involve faculty in planning, and in creating a demand for support and recognition of service work. The criteria for promotion and tenure should explicitly address professional service, which is easily related to teaching and research via service learning.” Dean Plater suggests that the CAO role include complimenting faculty work and offering support via workshops and meeting opportunities for faculty that are new, part-time, newly tenured, and senior “to help them understand where service fits in;” sending faculty leaders to conferences; providing opportunities to speak publicly of their work; and including the work in reports. “Institutionalize the ideas through awards, offices, rules - anything that seems like it might 'stick.' Make it important to enough people and enough funding will be found to support it.”