In April 2016, the Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good administered its third biennial survey regarding community partners’ use of USF and McCarthy Center resources and their general perceptions of the University (including the institution as a whole, as well as students and faculty) and its role in the community. Our intent is to survey data to shape our work with community and make recommendations across campus about implementing best practices in community partnerships. More specifically, results of this survey will be used to inform the resources and services we provide, ensure that the community partner voice is reflected in our work, and advocate for more effective community-engaged programming at USF.

**Questions the Survey Seeks to Answer**

*What is the nature of community partners’ relationships with USF?*

*Which USF and McCarthy Center resources do community partners currently use?*

*Which USF and McCarthy Center resources would community partners use, if available?*

*How do community partners perceive the university and its constituents?*

*What are community partner perceptions of collaborating with faculty and service-learning students?*

**Results (of those who had an opinion)**

**Attitudes about Working with Students:**

- 76% feel that having service-learners complete special projects for the organization is very or somewhat beneficial *(compared to 93% in 2014)*
- 94% feel that having service-learning students fill existing service opportunities is very or somewhat beneficial *(compared to 89% in 2014)*
- 100% find long-term student volunteers to be very or somewhat beneficial *(compared to 100% in 2014)*
- 100% find short-term (6 months or less) interns to be very or somewhat beneficial *(compared to 100% in 2014)*

**Reasons for Hosting Service-Learners:**

- 67% host service-learning students to fill existing service opportunities *(compared to 78% in 2014)*
- 80% host service-learning students to complete special projects at the organization *(compared to 73% in 2014)*
- 40% host service-learning students to expand the organization's outreach to the college demographic *(compared to 65% in 2014)*
- 60% host service-learning students to create relationships that may bring future employees, volunteers, or donors *(compared to 65% in 2014)*
- 80% host service-learners to develop/strengthen organization’s relationship with USF *(compared to 62% in 2014)*

**Perceptions of Student Preparation to Engage in the Community:**

- 80% feel students always or usually demonstrate professionalism in the community
- 89% feel students always or usually demonstrate cultural humility while in the community
● 76% feel students always or usually are positioned as learners while engaged with the host organization
● 80% feel students always or usually demonstrate motivation to engage meaningfully in the community
● 83% feel that students always or usually complete the service tasks asked of them (compared to 88% in 2014)
● 80% always or usually feel satisfied with the service work done by students (compared to 88% in 2012)

Perceptions of working with Community-Engaged Learning Faculty
● 69% feel faculty always or usually support organizational requirements for a service-learning partnership (compared to 73% in 2014)
● 69% feel faculty always or usually address student commitment issues quickly and fairly
● 54% feel faculty always or usually ensure that community partners receive service-learning students consistently each semester (compared to 60% in 2014)
● 64% feel faculty always or usually recruit service-learning students for community partner agencies (compared to 66% in 2014)
● 50% feel faculty always or usually invite community partners to participate in the evaluation process (compared to 44% in 2014)

Qualitative responses:
- "From my experience, partnerships with USF faculty for service learning students have been initiated by myself reaching out to faculty; only on one or two occasions did faculty reach out to me. We are especially interested in partnering with faculty in the STEM departments, but haven't had a response from our outreach to professors in these areas."
- "The recruitment process varies dependent on the class. Faculty's outreach in terms of evaluations, presentations, etc. has been inconsistent. It's usually the service-learners who may tell me about their final presentations."
- "None of the professors provided any guidelines or timelines that were important for their students in related to their service learning. Professors who were interested in partnering with our organization were excited about our work but may not be equipped to support their students with the types of questions students should ask us when they do projects with us. Some of the students are not prepared to ask the right questions, or the students not ready to organize themselves as a team to work with us."

Perception of USF vis-à-vis the Community:
● 85% of respondents feel that USF cares about outcomes of student service on clients (compared to 88% in 2014)
● 75% feel that USF helps students explore the social issues host organizations address (compared to 79% in 2014)
● 75% somewhat or strongly agree that USF supports the needs of their organization (compared to 86% in 2014)
● 82% feel that USF acts as a member of the larger community (compared to 90% in 2014)
● 93% feel empowered in the process of creating partnerships with faculty (compared to 97% in 2014)

Perceptions of the McCarthy Center:
● 74% at least somewhat agree the McCarthy Center supports community partners in building partnerships with faculty (compared to 85% in 2014)
● 83% at least somewhat agree the McCarthy Center provides relevant information and resources (compared to 91% in 2014)
● 80% at least somewhat agree the McCarthy Center supports the needs of community partner organizations (compared to 96% in 2014)
● 92% at least somewhat agree the McCarthy Center cares about the outcomes that students’ service has on clients (compared to 96% in 2014)
● 88% at least somewhat agree the McCarthy Center acts as a member of the larger community (compared to 82% in 2014)

Desired University Resources and Support:
● 90% would be at least somewhat likely to apply for computer donations if available (compared to 75% in 2014)
● 72% would be at least somewhat likely to access professional development training including technology training, career services, etc. (compared to 82% in 2014)
● 59% would be at least somewhat likely to access USF library (compared to 66% in 2014)
● 86% would be at least somewhat likely to use USF meeting spaces and rooms on campus (compared to 90% in 2014)
● 83% would be at least somewhat likely to utilize furniture donations (compared to 77% in 2014)

Desired McCarthy Center Partnership Resources and Support:
● 83% are at least somewhat likely to participate in introductory service-learning workshops (compared to 80% in 2014)
● 93% are at least somewhat likely to participate in advanced service-learning workshops (compared to 89% in 2014)
● 96% feel at least somewhat likely to use faculty partnership support including service project matchmaking, instructor referrals, etc. (compared to 97% in 2014)
● 93% feel at least somewhat likely to use project funds for service involving USF students (compared to 97% in 2014)
● 90% feel at least somewhat likely to use funds for collaborative research, program evaluation, and other projects

Nature of Relationship with USF:
● 78% of respondents have had a relationship with USF for more than two years (compared to 83% in 2014)
● 93% host USF students for various forms of service (compared to 97% in 2014)

Community Partner Engagement on Campus:
● 40% have participated as speakers or panelists at USF events (compared to 44% in 2014)
● 27% have been guest lecturers in USF courses (compared to 20% in 2014)
● 60% of respondents completed the McCarthy Centers’ Community Partner Seminar (compared to 60% in 2014)

Community-Identified Opportunities for Growth

● “I think there should be a separate SL class (maybe a 1 credit course) where all student taking service can all get the same information, have reflections built into the course, etc. It seems that information students receive is dependent on the faculty and/or department, which has been challenging to manage.”
● “Somehow students need a stronger self-assessment of their skills and interest in doing community engaged learning. It’s almost like students take CEL as light reading assignments that don’t require much investment.”
• “Cultural competency courses or trainings may be helpful for our foreign placements but overall students are of high quality.”
• “I think that students who enroll in service learning classes should receive a workshop or small session on civic engagement to better explore personal reasons for service learning. Students should also be prepared to volunteer in a professional setting.”

Other Community Partner Feedback

• “We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work closely with the McCarthy Center and value the work of our Advocates for Community Engagement; they play a vital role in supporting our work and mission!”
• “We have been very impressed with the quality of students we have worked with (which is not always the case with students from other schools!)”
• “As a LGBTQ organization, we are incredibly impressed with the openness, interest, and commitment to our mission.”
• “Working with students has its ups and downs, but faculty and the McCarthy Center are strong partners in trying to figure out how to make the work with students effective for us and for USF and for students. We do appreciate the work of the faculty and McCarthy center in working towards finding a way through this maze of divergent needs/interests.”
• “Truly appreciate our experiences with USF students and look forward to growing our relationship with USF.”

Methodology
The survey was sent to approximately 250 nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools, and community contacts. To create a comprehensive list of community partners invited to participate in this survey, the center led outreach to every college, center, and departments on campus that offers community-engaged experiences. Survey recipients were given two weeks to complete the survey, and we received 37 responses. This gave us a 15% response rate (compared to 22% in 2014), which is comparable to response rates for similar surveys distributed by other universities.