

Types of Higher Ed Institutions

Two-Year Institutions

- Includes UW Colleges campuses and Wisconsin Technical College System schools, and some other vocational and technical schools
- Award two-year associate degrees and certificates that prepare for work or transfer to four-year institutions
- Typically serve local populations

Advantages:

- Because local, many students are familiar with the community and local issues and may be actively looking to “give back”.
- Faculty are generally committed to teaching (over research) and they are likely to see the educational benefits of service-learning.
- Institutional missions are to serve the communities where they are located. These institutions are often thought of as “public spaces” and “economic engines” for local community development.
- These institutions frequently have partnerships with local government and businesses with possibilities for tapping into.
- The UW Colleges, in particular, have strong connections with UW-Extension that may be valuable for building service-learning partnerships. There are UW-Extension Continuing Education faculty on each campus who may serve as important contacts.

Limitations:

- Faculty often have heavy teaching loads and little time for community-based research or for designing service-learning experiences
- Many students work and have families to care for in addition to school, often leaving little time to be involved in the community.

Four-Year Institutions

- Includes UW colleges and universities, and private colleges and universities
- Award bachelor’s degrees and universities also offer master’s and doctoral degrees

Advantages:

- Often have a wider variety of academic and research programs (due to greater size and research orientations).
- Some universities have law schools and medical schools that can provide assistance to community legal and medical clinics.
- Colleges often will focus more on teaching and they can provide committed students and faculty for community organizing and advocacy.
- UW colleges and universities, as a part of the UW System, already have strong ties to UW-Extension on which to build service-learning partnerships. There are many UW-Extension integrated faculty on campuses, as well as Continuing Education faculty, who can be valuable contacts.

Public vs. Private

- All UW System schools have public mandates to apply teaching and research to meeting public needs.
- However, many private, especially faith-based, colleges and universities have historical missions based in service and social justice.
- Identifying an institution's mandates and missions will help you understand faculty and staff's motivations and assist your arguments when seeking their support.

Adapted from Scheibel, Jim, Erin M. Bowley, and Steven Jones. *The Promise of Partnerships: Tapping into the College as a Community Asset*. Providence, R.I.: Campus Compact, 2005.