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This paper examines the role of urban universities in assisting municipal improvement through a case analysis of Project SWEEP, an effort being conducted jointly between Temple University and the Philadelphia Streets Department to improve the urban landscape through better sanitation awareness, education, and enforcement. The role of urban universities in the design and implementation of such projects includes the identification of underlying assumptions in urban renewal projects, the design of job-related curricula for front-line service delivery personnel and for nontraditional audiences, and the transfer of the training function to municipal agencies.

Urban Universities and Municipal Improvement

Reclaiming Philadelphia's Landscape

Universities with urban missions are in a unique position to assist municipal governments in designing training and evaluation efforts aimed at civic improvement. In addition to their expertise in designing educational programs, urban universities have a special relationship with their surroundings. While town-gown relationships may be complicated by the blurred boundaries between the university and the city, the survival of the urban university is intimately tied to the survival of its hosting city, and projects seeking to improve the quality of life in the urban setting are as beneficial to the university as to the hosting city. Consequently, participation in urban renewal projects should reflect a normative commitment on the part of universities with urban missions.

Metropolitan universities have long provided educational and training programs for professionals in municipal agencies. The common targets for these programs are improvements in municipal management, enhanced analytical activity in municipal agencies, and enriched civic leadership. Extension courses, weekend programs, special seminars—all have been well developed over the years in virtually all major metropolitan universities.

However, there has not been a similar development in university-based training programs for the blue-collar individuals who often are responsible for implementing improvement programs. The project

described in this paper illustrates an extensive and largely untapped market for applying the university's expertise in curriculum design and training methods in order to reach the large audience of service workers whose competency is often the ultimate key to the success of civic improvement programs.

The project reported here is an innovative approach to the enforcement of litter removal in Philadelphia and was designed for implementation in spring 1991. Project SWEEP—Streets and Walkways Environmental Enforcement Program—was originally conceived of by municipal personnel. Their basic concepts required translation into an active training curriculum. Temple University, the large, comprehensive, senior "urban mission" institution in Philadelphia, joined forces with the Philadelphia Streets Department to design a program to be implemented together. The curriculum is intended for delivery to a nontraditional group of students: service workers in the Streets Department. The university is responsible for designing the curriculum, testing it in the classroom, evaluating and revising the curriculum based on initial experiences, and finally transferring the training program to the municipality. This project is used as the model to explore the role metropolitan universities can have in the design of programs requiring skills that are central to academia, including the formulation of appropriate theories and assumptions, the application of planning techniques, the development of curriculum and training programs, and the mechanisms for assessing results.

The SWEEP Project

Philadelphia, like many American cities, has for years experienced a creeping urban blight that has left parts of the city in shambles. Graffiti, trash strewn about neighborhoods and business areas, abandoned automobiles, and a crumbling infrastructure contribute to a public perception of urban decline and leave city residents feeling wary and vulnerable. The deterioration of the environment symbolizes the loss of civic order and increases city residents' fear of crime and victimization. (See, for example, Suggested Readings: Skogan; and Taylor, Schumaker, and Gottfredson.) A 1989 study conducted by the Pennsylvania Economy League, a public-sector policy analysis group, concluded that "sanitation enforcement efforts in Philadelphia are sadly inadequate, and much of Philadelphia's trouble with litter comes from its lack of an effective sanitation enforcement program."

Litter enforcement in Philadelphia has been primarily the responsibility of the police department, but the enforcement of litter regulations has proven to be both beyond their physical capability and their ideological commitment. The department assigns to each district "sanitation officers" who are charged primarily with addressing serious trash-dumping problems, and additional police officers to address problems of abandoned automobiles. Approximately eighteen individuals have been given the responsibility of dealing with the most glaring sanitation

problems in Philadelphia found typically in deteriorating neighborhoods—abandoned autos and abandoned trash.

One of the important sources of trash is *short-dumping*—the illegal unloading of refuse by trash collectors who want to avoid the expenses of using approved landfills. This practice puts tremendous stress on neighborhoods that are in decline; abandoned properties are notorious places for short-dumping, and residents in these areas have been poorly organized to stem such activities. Other contributors to the city's litter problem are the major business areas, such as the central business district. One estimate in Philadelphia was that 70 percent of the city's trash problems were business related.

Project SWEEP places forty-five enforcement officers and six supervisors on Philadelphia's streets to enforce litter, sanitation, and dumpster ordinances. These officers have regular beats, encouraging their integration into the residential and business districts. SWEEP is based on voluntary compliance, and it links public education and awareness with sanitation enforcement. The project perceives the city and its merchants and residents as clients, making the program as much a civic pride program as a sanitation enforcement program. SWEEP centers the responsibility for sanitation on public walkways and streets in a single agency, so as to eliminate the boundary disputes created by fractionalized responsibility when two or more agencies are involved in litter enforcement. SWEEP does not emphasize the income that is generated in cases where citations are needed. Prior experience with new parking regulations has taught that enforcement predicated on income generation is not well received by the public and is not a good basis for gaining voluntary compliance. SWEEP was designed to overcome the disadvantages of court-based remedies by a system of progressive sanction, encouraging violators to settle their cases in administrative hearings, with only serious and contested violations forwarded to the Municipal Courts. This appealed to the feelings of both the citizenry and judges that the courts should be dealing with real criminals, and not minor trash violators.

The Role of Universities in Designing Municipal Improvement Projects

Many municipal improvement projects are created on the basis of relatively unsupported assumptions and with little theoretical framework. As a result, the premises undergirding these programs are generally not amenable to systematic analysis. The participation of universities at the level of program design can avoid the problems that arise from the lack of appropriate conceptual foundations. Universities contain the expertise for testing theories, and urban universities have extensive experience in investigating the kinds of assumptions related to civic improvement projects.

The SWEEP program involves the placement of personnel into beats, where they patrol regularly, visit business people and residents, distribute literature, speak to community organizations, and work toward becoming integrated into neighborhoods. The goal is to replace a

punishment-based sanitation control system with active citizen participation based on voluntary compliance.

The idea for SWEEP was originally based on several underlying assumptions about civic pride, voluntary compliance, municipal code enforcement, and the "objective level of trash" in the city of Philadelphia. The linkages among these assumptions were tenuous when the program was started. Is it appropriate to conclude that increasing public awareness will lead to civic commitment and voluntary compliance, in turn resulting in an improvement of the litter problems in a community? Furthermore, the linkage between physical incivility (trash) and social incivility (crime) was not part of the Streets Department original concept of the project. Providing the department with this theoretical rationale for their efforts greatly increased their points of contact with the citizenry—SWEEP is not only about trash, but about urban disorder as well. Such relationships have salient social and political implications. In addition, these concepts are challenging for faculty studying urban environments, because they represent treatments for social problems that can be tested and evaluated.

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The abilities to recognize, explicate, and test such assumptions are examples of the important contributions that universities can make to program design. Many urban universities can make further contributions because, as part of their own environment, they have amassed years of data monitoring many municipal functions and assessing many of the linkages that undergird contemplated programs. Being part of the urban landscape, they often confront the same problems as their municipal hosts. As a result, these universities usually have a wealth of information about urban regions that can be invaluable to the design and implementation of municipal projects aimed at social and economic reform at many levels.

Municipal agencies also frequently lack the experience required to integrate the complicated social, political, and economic networks required for the success of most municipal improvement programs. Program personnel must foresee and predict how projects such as SWEEP will be accepted by many audiences. How will the business community react? The residential community? The enforcement and adjudication communities? Experience and knowledge are required. Urban universities typically have the experience and knowledge to relate these complex interactions successfully and to analyze and understand the urban dynamics—both bureaucratic and social—which are indispensable if lasting programs are to emerge. Temple University has had many years of interaction with municipal government, which provides it with a unique and independent evaluation of the existing bureaucratic and social systems within which a program such as SWEEP is to function.

There is the additional issue of the lack of long-term planning in the design of many community improvement projects. All too often bureaucracies are concerned with immediate results and not long-term consequences. Demonstration projects can get caught up in the need to

show results without thinking through intended and unintended consequences. (See, for example, Suggested Readings: Rossi, Freeman, and Wright; Suchman; and Williams and Elmore.) Temple's continuous analysis of the urban milieu and the understanding of its faculty that both short- and long-term consequences must be taken into consideration, were a significant factor in enhancing the success potential of the SWEEP program.

Finally, the most obvious factor in the university-agency partnership is the expertise of the university in curriculum design, implementation, testing and revision, competencies that are seldom well developed in municipal agencies. The scope of the expertise needed for success is especially large in projects such as SWEEP, which cut across several agencies: SWEEP officers are responsible for educating the public, encouraging and fostering voluntary compliance, improving civic pride, explaining and enforcing municipal sanitation ordinances, organizing neighborhoods and communities in cleanup activities, and interacting with other sanitation enforcement agents within the city. Such job complexity presents a challenge even to universities, and the ultimate success of the university's role rests in the ability to transfer sophisticated educational and training technologies to the hosting agency.

The Design of the Training Program

The curriculum is designed for supervisors and SWEEP enforcement officers. The development of the program was divided into three stages: (1) Curriculum Design and Pretesting, (2) Curriculum Transfer, and (3) Curriculum Implementation. The following is a brief description of the details related directly to the design of the training program.

Curriculum Design and Pretesting

Extensive interviews were conducted with appropriate personnel from the Streets Department to determine the scope of the anticipated sanitation effort. Then, a team of curriculum specialists was assembled to design a program that sought to accomplish at least four objectives: (1) orient SWEEP personnel to the scope of their responsibilities; (2) develop interpersonal and communication skills; (3) develop the necessary enforcement strategies; and (4) develop information about the legal and administrative codes that would be needed by the personnel.

The unique nature of the proposed job characteristics of SWEEP personnel led to plans for interspersing hands-on training with the design phase of the curriculum. The initial training of line personnel was designed to occur over three months, staged to provide the requisite knowledge for the personnel initially assigned to public education functions. Subsequently, more detailed enforcement training would follow as the training team gained information from the experiences of those who received the initial training, and as their job requirements expanded.

Curriculum Transfer

The second stage of the project consists of the transfer of the curriculum and its delivery to the Philadelphia Streets Department. Personnel assigned to enforcement and supervisory positions within the SWEEP initiative were to be trained directly through Temple University. Transfer of these materials from Temple University to the Streets Department is also designed to occur through the implementation of a *Training the Trainers* program, which accommodates personnel selected by the department and prepares them for the role of trainers for the next group of SWEEP officers who will need the training. This technology transfer makes possible the long-term institutionalization of the curriculum within the city of Philadelphia, making future efforts less dependent on outside contractors. This part of the project also includes an assessment by Temple of the progress of the transfer.

Curriculum Implementation

The Temple team was designed to conduct the initial training of Streets Department personnel, as well as future trainers. This classroom instruction was to be monitored, and the results used by Temple to assess the classroom presentation of the curriculum, participant reactions, and understanding of the training program by the participants.

At the conclusion of the project the Streets Department should have several products. A validated curriculum, presented as part of the final revision process, would include:

- a *Curriculum Manual* including all lesson plans, learning objectives, and classroom materials;
- a *Student Study Guide* oriented toward assisting selected sanitation personnel with learning the materials; and
- a *Testing Procedures and Student Evaluation Materials*.

Emphasis on University-Agency Collaboration

The use of a collaborative model of curriculum design is essential to an effective role for universities in designing training programs for nontraditional users. The outcome of collaboration will help ensure the utility of these materials for SWEEP program participants at all levels. This approach also speaks to understanding the nature of the client for whom training is designed.

Collectively, the design was based on grounding the SWEEP program in the occupational experiences of the first group of SWEEP officers. Collaboration occurred from the beginning with the qualitative assessment of SWEEP officer roles as envisioned by the municipal authorities who had nurtured the original concept. Qualitative assessment of role, city needs, and interactions among several municipal agencies provided a beginning point for grounding the SWEEP training program

into the needs of the city of Philadelphia. The institutionalization of the SWEEP training curriculum as it becomes an in-house program also provides an ownership in the program that will help ensure its continuation.

The staged implementation of the preliminary SWEEP training curriculum, coupled with an assessment of the work experiences of SWEEP officers, is designed to provide sufficient information for adjusting the program once it is underway. This part of the design is rooted in the literature of formative program evaluation and emphasizes the expertise within universities that can enhance ideas for community projects.

The enrichment of the original idea is also found in the design of the selection process for the SWEEP program. SWEEP officers, primarily people who currently collect trash and refuse throughout the city, have not been exposed to much preemployment training. More intimate knowledge of the personnel selection and screening process will help inform the SWEEP curriculum and training methods.

On a grander level, university-designed training for occupations not normally associated with advanced training is an important contribution that urban universities can make to civic improvement. Most urban municipalities employ thousands of workers who are the front-line service providers for a host of municipal services. Assessment of the training and development needs of these occupations is not currently systematic. Urban universities can play an important role in developing a systematic posture on the part of urban municipalities in preparing their several work forces. Such systematic thought can go a long way toward improving basic municipal services, while providing municipal workers with a sense of purpose.

Conclusion

As a prototype of university/municipal partnership, the SWEEP program in Philadelphia exemplifies the means by which urban universities can meet the challenge of increasing their investment in municipal improvements at several levels. Urban universities can have a dramatic effect on urban policy by providing the forum through which theories of urban practice can be made explicit and, by implication, made testable. Faculty and staff from the academic institutions must explicate the theoretical rationale for such projects, tease out the causal linkages necessary to achieve project outcomes, provide and analyze data, design job-related curricula for front-line service providers, and assess project impacts.

The methodologies for these roles are well developed in universities, but past university-municipality relations have tended to exist at the management level. Current trends in the improvement of municipal urban service delivery require educational and training curricula designed for service provider roles, which have typically escaped university interest. The accommodation of nontraditional occupations, with their nontraditional students, requires university expertise in designing valid curricula for individuals who might otherwise not participate in outside

training and educational programs. At the same time, the need for sensitivity to the clients of the training, as well as to the objectives of the training program, is an important challenge for universities.

Finally, the SWEEP program and Temple University's involvement in the design of the curricula for this effort illustrate the span of the urban mission ascribed to universities within metropolitan areas. By extending its reach into service-level training curricula, the urban university can greatly increase the chances for successful project implementation and by consequence, for improvement in the urban landscape.

Suggested Readings

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