



April 2, 2014

Dear Carnegie Re-classification Committee:

This letter is written in support of Oklahoma State University's application for re-classification in community engagement. It is my privilege to lead OSU in the next phase of its advancement of community engagement. Ours is an institution with world-class faculty, whose passion for service and problem-solving put them at the forefront of engagement scholarship. Throughout my presidency I have lent my voice, public support, and encouragement to the building of our engagement infrastructure. It is my vision that Oklahoma State's future in engagement be recognized and made ever more accessible to our fellow citizens, as we continue to be responsive to our community partners.

It is an honor to build on OSU's great legacy as a land-grant institution. We are true to our roots in providing education and outreach to the communities we serve, through our academic programs, research, symposia and direct service. Oklahoma State's outreach is constant and consistent. Our extension program celebrates its 100th anniversary this spring, and OSU maintains Cooperative Extension County Offices across all 77 counties in the state. As our commitment to community service has evolved, we have extended our partnerships from the state, to the nation and the throughout the world, seeking to build capacities and sustainability in making generational change. We are and have long been concerned with our neighbors' needs, and have adjusted our programs and responses to what our partners call for, whether it is economic development, wellness, access to educational opportunity, social justice, stewardship of public lands or any other number of crucial matters.

Community engagement is one of three core goals prominent in OSU's strategic plan. To cultivate partners, to assess their needs, and to promote a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources are explicitly stated and key elements of the university's organizational strategy.

We promote engagement by sponsoring the Service Learning Volunteer Center (SLVC), which continues to be a destination for students and faculty to receive resources that promote service and service learning. The SLVC also partners with the Institute for Teaching and Learning Excellence to promote service learning pedagogies to faculty.

Numerous centers and institutes across campus and off-site, such as the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship, the Center for Educational Research and Evaluation, or the Center for Family Resiliency have been put in place to provide a physical home and staffing for a 'front porch' of contact to those individual and organizational partners who seek collaborations or an exchange of ideas with Oklahoma State University. Most recently, the University Network for Community Engagement (UNCE) comprised of community engagement or service learning representatives from all colleges, Student Affairs, the OSU Foundation, and other divisions has been formed. The UNCE meets regularly to share information, plan and collaborate on engagement opportunities, and works to further infuse community engagement into institutional practices.

Our commitment to community engagement reaches from the past, in its various forms such as extension and outreach, over the span of Oklahoma State's history. We are proud to continue and expand our institutional responsibility to serving the public good, and welcome this review of Oklahoma State University's community engagement documentation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Burns Hargis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

V. Burns Hargis