

The Coös County Outreach Initiative (CCOI)

A Rural Regional Engagement Model for Higher Education

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What is the CCOI?

The Coös County Outreach Initiative is a program that provides seed funding and institutional support for collaborative partnerships between PSU faculty, staff, students and regional partners.

Faculty, staff, and students apply for competitive internal grants through the Center for the purpose of creating partnerships which are relevant to their interests and expertise.

CCOI has three distinct purposes:

- Make PSU more legible to the general public
- To inspire faculty, staff, & students to relate their own work to rural New Hampshire
- Promote greater knowledge of off-campus resources and opportunities

How does CCOI Work?

- Request For Proposals (RFP) issued to campus community at regular intervals throughout the year
- Collaborative information sessions held to answer applicant questions and provide input on possible projects
- CCOI steering committee (including off-campus leaders) reviews applications and makes decisions in collaboration with the Center

Sample Funded Projects

•Beyond Brown Paper

Engaged local community-held knowledge by bringing enlarged images from the Brown Paper collection back to northern New Hampshire; created a forum where classes and other groups gathered to view, discuss, and learn from the images

•Student math teachers in Coös County schools

Attempted to increase the number of qualified math teachers in Coös County middle and high schools, creating a durable network between the PSU Math Department and Coös County schools

•Marketing a Coös County tourism destination

Tourism Marketing students developed a marketing action plan for the Trailside Lodge and assisted the owner in implementing the plan

•2+2 information technology agreement

In partnership with a local community college, administrators evaluated curriculum and courses to develop an articulation agreement linking the Information Technology majors of both schools

•Hanover Chamber Orchestra Performance

Funded a performance by a professional orchestra in Coös County and provided enhanced music education opportunities to rural students through teacher preparation and classroom visits

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These collaborative projects not only benefit faculty, but also strengthen relationships between PSU students and rural stakeholders. As a whole, the CCOI program leverages additional resources for rural New Hampshire and serves generally as a catalyst for regional prosperity.

What is the Center for Rural Partnerships?

The Center for Rural Partnerships uses the research, outreach, and educational capacity of Plymouth State University to foster collaborative projects that maintain and enhance the quality of life in rural New Hampshire.

What we do:

- Mobilize university expertise and resources for the benefit of rural places
- Create learning opportunities for PSU faculty, staff, and students
- Strengthen relationships between PSU and rural New Hampshire
- Develop and complete meaningful projects with a variety of stakeholders

Benefits of CCOI

In addition to numerous direct benefits:

- Request For Proposals (RFP) has led to greater attention to outreach and off-campus partnership
- Recognized component of a larger effort on campus to revitalize outreach, service, and research
- Faculty and off-campus partners have leveraged success financially