

## Participant Feedback from the Fourth McKee Learning Lunch

### How Global Is Local?

January 13, 2015

This learning experience was co-sponsored by Eleanor Cooper, Community Visioning and Engagement Strategist; and the McKee Chair of Excellence in Learning, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

#### Introduction

In recent years, Chattanooga has become a site of international investment. That investment has, in turn, galvanized the city's interest in the global economy. Chattanooga's citizens, however, have discovered how challenging it is to developing ways in which the city can meet the necessary cultural and educational changes that result from a global reality.

In order to address the issues that result when a city becomes a part of the global economy, we invited Kevin Cottrell, Director of Transatlantic Leadership Initiatives of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, to initiate our discussion. In order to provide structure for the discussion, we asked Kevin to provide examples of what other cities are doing to meet the challenge of becoming more global. He was to do so by addressing these three primary questions:

- What issues do cities face as they become more global?
- What economic and cultural impacts do such cities experience?
- How do we, as Chattanoogaans, balance local issues and global issues?

Unfortunately, owing to inclement weather and the resulting canceled flights, Kevin was unable to be present. Fortunately, though, he had provided us with his *8-Point Strategy for a Globally Engaged Community* in advance. That strategy served as the basis for our discussion.

Listed below are the eight key elements needed to develop civic strategies that strengthen city/global engagement. The elements are not listed in order of priority; each element is equally relevant. Depth and synchronization across these elements are fundamental to civic leadership. Leaders conduct capacity scans, which they then use to assess the natural abilities of the city or organization to be globally engaged. Analysis includes insights into the existing global connectivity of the local population and institutional stakeholders. Analysis also provides an awareness and understanding of trends. The ultimate goals of the process are to (a) develop a vision for global engagement, (b) create a strategy to realize this vision, (c) establish program opportunities and metrics, (d) implement the strategy with a timeline, (e) access resources, and (f) develop communication around the initiative.

- **Business and Labor.** Align business, the labor workforce, and international-trade strategies and infrastructure-development strategies.
- **NGOs (non-governmental organizations).** Create or strengthen NGOs that connect local communities to global issues and trends.
- **K-12 Education.** Develop stronger curricular and extracurricular activities that encourage interest in global issues throughout K-12 education.
- **Higher Education.** Leverage higher-education institutions in order to make global-engagement efforts through student and faculty exchanges, lectures, and research.

- **Elected Leadership.** Develop programs in order to (a) engage future elected and appointed officials in global issues and trends and (b) make stronger connections between local and global trends, [thereby increasing] the capacity to engage in international agendas, professional exchange, and learning.

- **Social and Civic Inclusion.** Create greater connectivity between immigrant communities and other traditionally underrepresented groups. [In addition,] develop international economic strategies and regional governance.

- **Arts and Culture.** Expand strategies within the art and cultural sectors that promote learning, understanding, and local experiences on global themes.

- **Media.** Encourage more local-media coverage of the city's global connectivity, including spotlights on ethnic enclaves and community festivals, civic-leader profiles, and other cultural events.

In accordance with the process used at every McKee Learning Lunch, there were three general feedback opportunities, or Assignments 1, 2, and 3. The responses to Assignments 1 and 2 are presented below. Owing to time restraints, however, we were unable to obtain answers to these two standard questions, which comprise Assignment 3: "What is the most important thing that you learned today?" and "What unanswered question(s) are you leaving with?"

### Assignment 1

**Pre-discussion Question: Prior to the presentation and discussion, what question(s) do you have about this topic? The responses follow.**

#### Collaboration

- How can we broaden the spirit and practice of international exchange to the general public?
- How do we connect the global community with global organizations and initiatives? How do we [develop] diplomacy?
- What are the three most important steps [to creating] a more open and effective partnership across businesses, education, government, and nonprofits to integrate people from all groups in all cultures?
- How can Chattanooga's global businesses and corporations better engage, employ, and empower Chattanooga's population as a whole?
- How do we get city leaders (a) to realize the importance of Chattanooga being more global and (b) to understand the city's global impact?
- What opportunities does Chattanooga have to work with non-profit organizations in South Africa?

#### Chattanooga—Ready and Willing?

- How global is the Chattanooga area really willing to become?
- To what extent *should* Chattanooga be global? How do we determine that?
- Where is there a place in Chattanooga for "global to become local?"
- Is Chattanooga a welcoming place for immigrants?
- Who is the most influential recruiter for foreign investments in Chattanooga?
- Are people in our community satisfied with the choices of international food in [local] groceries and restaurants?

### **General Education**

- How can we develop the ideas presented here in public-school classrooms, beginning with elementary school?
- Now is an era of stress in basic skills (math and reading) in K–12 education. How do we sustain content-rich international-education offerings?
- What are the public-school systems in Hamilton County and the surrounding 16-county region doing to prepare our youth for an increasingly diverse/global/international work life?
- At the local level, how can global learning be funded for higher education?
- How can student organizations get involved with businesses and organizations outside the university?

### **Multilingual Education**

- What will it take for the Chattanooga community to develop an interest in international education and bilingual education?
- What would it take to convince educators of the importance of multilingual education?
- What languages are taught in Hamilton County schools, and what determines which languages are offered at each school?
- Why are there no government funds to develop a robust and research-based world-language program?
- How can we Chattanoogaans collectively have an impact on education by raising funds for a world-language program?

### **Community and University Involvement**

- How can the art and cultural communities of Chattanooga better reflect the diverse multicultural aspects of its citizens?
- What is the most effective platform in Chattanooga for evaluating our city's global engagement?
- Why are our street signs not multilingual if we have such a large international population?
- How can Chattanooga and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga community better engage our immigrants to feel more integrated and [and to feel that they are] a vital part of the community? How can they share their cultures and backgrounds with the entire community?
- What is Chattanooga doing to integrate immigrants into the local culture?
- How can we create a platform or centralize point of contact on all things international?

## **Assignment 2**

**In the context of Cottrell's 8-point strategy for a globally engaged community, Please discuss the following questions.**

**Question 1. Which of the eight essential elements is the Chattanooga region doing very well? How? Why? What follows are the responses of the six groups.**

- *Business and labor*: 4 groups out of 6
- *Civic and social*: 2 groups out of 6
- *Arts and culture*: 1 group out of 6
- *Elected leadership*: 1 group out of 6.

- One group suggested that Chattanooga’s position as an environmentally conscious, or “green,” city is one of its strengths from a global perspective—even though this characteristic is not one of Cottrell’s categories.

**Question 2. Over the next 3 to 5 years, which of the eight elements can the Chattanooga region make the most progress through concerted civic and business leadership? Why? How?**

- K–12 education needs to include more languages in the early grades.
- The many immigrants and non-English-speaking groups should be included in the system.
- Higher education needs to prepare students for a global mindset.
- International students at universities can encourage the community to be more inclusive.
- Workers in global companies and professionals in general need to learn about global issues.
- Elected officials need to be prepared and educated [about intercultural matters].
- Leadership Chattanooga could add a global component to its curriculum.
- Pathways to Prosperity, a large national initiative with research-based support, could be promoted.

*Note:* Two groups suggested that a center for global strategy be established. The center would coordinate efforts in business, education, the arts, and other areas.

## Participants

**We would like to thank the following participants for their interest in and contribution to this McKee Learning Lunch.**

**Rowena Belcher.** President, Rotary Club of Chattanooga.

**Bengt Carlson.** Experiential Learning Coordinator, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

**Karen Claypool.** Owner and Director, Across the Languages.

**David Cook.** Metro Columnist, *Times Free Press*.

**Eleanor McCallie Cooper.** Community visioning and engagement strategist.

**Lulu Copeland.** Manager, Extended Technical Education and Training, Engineering Technology Division, Chattanooga State Community College.

**Stephen Culp.** Co-founder and Principal, PriceWaiter, Delegator, Smart Furniture, and the Chattanooga Renaissance Fund.

**Candice Davis.** Manager, Marketing and Public Relations, Chattanooga Visitors Bureau.

**Jana Eichel.** Employee Relations & Recruiting Specialist, Volkswagen Group of America.

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**Wade Hinton.** Attorney, City of Chattanooga.

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**Charles Wood.** Vice President of Economic Development, Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce.