

For Immediate Release
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USI convenes 14-member community advisory panel

Economic development executives, a school superintendent, a mayor, and human resource specialists are among 14 opinion leaders from southern Indiana, southern Illinois, and western Kentucky who are serving on a community advisory panel organized by University of Southern Indiana President H. Ray Hoops.

President Hoops is convening the panel as one facet of a project to determine how USI academic programs can meet the future workforce and economic development needs of Indiana and the tri-state region. The first meeting of the panel was held today at USI.

The panel is composed of representatives from the tri-state and the eleven counties in southern Indiana that make up Region 13, USI's principal service region. "We want to integrate the thinking of community leaders in our audit of the University curriculum," President Hoops said. "We hope this panel can help us better understand the needs of the tri-state and the southern Indiana region in terms of economic and workforce development. Their recommendations will help us set priorities and plan for implementation and resources," he added.

Earlier this year, President Hoops convened an institution-wide task force to undertake a comprehensive audit of the curriculum. He charged the task force to develop a substantive review of courses and programs, to collect data and information necessary to take program support requests to state agencies, to create a plan for USI to be more engaged and responsive to regional economic development, to update the University's economic impact model, and to raise awareness in the region of USI's efforts to review and improve its curriculum. The community advisory panel will provide information to support several of these charges.

The panel members are

Michael Alvey, producer and director of "My Classic Car" for Bradley David Productions, Evansville

Mike Belwood, director of communications, Alcoa Warrick Operations, Newburgh

David Cox, executive director, Daviess County Growth Council, Washington

Nancy Eckerle, executive director, Jasper Chamber of Commerce, Jasper

Bill Harmon, business leader, Carmi, Illinois

Randall Harris, Jr., mayor, Petersburg, and a 1987 USI graduate

Angela K. Mann, management and program assistant, Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC), Martin County

Dr. Ira Neal, retired educator, Evansville

Doug Padgett, general manager, WEHT-TV, Henderson

Paula Pinkstaff, assistant manager, Human Resources, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana, Princeton

Gary Schwartz, executive vice president, Kimball International, Jasper

Ruth Ann Sellers, Indiana Michigan Power Plant, Rockport

Dr. Keith Spurgeon, superintendent, Mt. Vernon School District, Mt. Vernon

Greg Wathen, executive director, Perry County Development Corporation, Tell City

Panelists represent various occupational interests. Depending on recommendations of the panel, USI may host meetings in the region to gain further information about future educational needs.

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