

For immediate release

News from the University of Southern Indiana

Regional focus group to be held March 26 at Daviess Community Hospital

Washington, Indiana, community leaders have been invited to participate in a regional focus group conducted by the University of Southern Indiana on Monday March 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Daviess Community Hospital. Joe Wellman, president of Peoples Bank, a member of USI's Community Advisory Panel, is assisting the University in collecting data for the USI President's 2007 Task Force on Economic and Workforce Development.

The task force is charged with auditing curricula, educational and training programs and recommending changes; studying the economic and social trends of the communities USI serves to identify gaps between existing program offerings and the changing needs of regional employers; conducting a study of USI's economic impact on the regional economy; and mounting an effort to create awareness of these issues and solicit feedback on the University's role as an agency for economic development.

President H. Ray Hoops said he fully expects this 2007 task force to bring information that will shape the University's direction in the next five to 10 years. He said, "The mission of this work is to examine the University's leadership and responsiveness in regional economic development and to recommend academic and training programs that will meet the future workforce and economic development needs of the region. We welcome the insights of regional community leaders."

A similar task force issued a report in 2000, and in response to the study, the University implemented several new undergraduate programs, including engineering, special education, applied computer science, and nutrition, as well as new master's level programs in health administration, occupational therapy, nursing, and public administration. In addition, the University has created leadership training programs, broadened its workforce training offerings, taken a primary role in economic development initiatives in southwestern Indiana, expanded its student/employer internship and co-op programs, and offered diversity training and awareness programs.

The report will be completed by the end of June and shared with the public at that time. Public comment is welcome and can be sent to the Office of Advancement at USI by email, advance@usi.edu.

Reporters are welcome to attend the meeting.