

**DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY: NON-ACADEMIC ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Academic Year 2005-06**

**I. Unit Title:** **Special Projects**

**Division or School/College:** **President's Office**

**Unit Administrator:** **Myrtis Tabb**

**II. Educational Program Learning Outcome Assessment Plan**

These are Learner Outcomes identified for the **current** year. Contents of the table should be very brief. Footnotes may be included for items needing explanation or documentation. Not all units have direct student impact. Those that do should have clear learner outcomes developed. Those with no student contact may indicate that this section is not applicable.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learning Outcome</b> <i>What should a graduate in this major know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Data Collection and Analysis</b> <i>What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome? Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be collected. Explain the procedure to analyze the data.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Results of Evaluation</b> <i>What were the findings of the analysis? List any specific recommendations.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Use of Evaluation Results</b> <i>What changes in curriculum, courses or procedures were made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process?</i></p>
<p>The programs in the Special Projects Department do not have direct impacts on students, but on the community.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

### III. Division/Department Goals for the Current Year

This is a report on progress towards goals for the **current year**. These are operational goals for the unit that are NOT tied directly to student learning outcomes which are reported in the table above. An example might be the implementation of a personnel development plan to enhance the skills of the staff in a unit.

#### A. **Goal # 1 – Mid-South Delta Leaders Program: To create a network of leaders throughout the tri-state Delta region of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi who are willing to work together towards positive change.**

##### 1. Institutional Goal which was supported by this goal:

*SP#5: The citizens of the region will benefit from increases in university outreach, service and partnership initiatives.*

##### 2. Evaluation Procedure(s):

Qualitative interviews were conducted with participants to ascertain the context in which they operate as leaders. The pre-interviews provided information as to how program participants currently view their leadership activities and what impacts they anticipate involvement in MSDL will bring. The post interview process will provide details as to how the MSDL program structure has impacted leadership skills and knowledge, networks and their resolve to lead within the Delta. It will also explore the context in which these leaders are using their skills, resources and networks obtained during the course of the program.

Pre and post surveys explore the mean change on variables of interest. The analysis of these items is similar to the original research conducted at the University of Missouri—Columbia (Pigg, 2001) which used factor analysis with the survey items and found five factors. These factors are community knowledge, community commitment, shared future and vision, civic engagement and personal growth and efficacy. These factors are applicable to the intended outcomes of the Mid-South Delta Leaders program and thus will be explored as part of this evaluation process.

Focus groups were conducted at two points during the evaluation process. A mid-point focus group explored the participants experience within the program to that point. This exercise was used to determine any areas within the program structure that needed further attention. The participatory nature of this exercise allowed participants to express and make known those content areas which they would like to revisit or issues that need to be discussed. This is an important tool given the participants engaged in the study tour of the Delta and the Delta Issues Summit following this process. This focus group shedded light on those areas which may be explored during these two events.

A second focus group will be conducted at program's end. This focus group will be used to explore what "next steps" are needed in terms of their leadership involvement in the Delta now that they have graduated from the program. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss how they may utilize the networks created during the course of the program.

### 3. Actual Results of Evaluation:

There are seven Mid-South Delta Leaders outcomes that are addressed in this report. Some outcomes are readily assessable at this point in the class, but for others it is too soon to report any impacts. Appendix A provides a full analysis of the MSDL outcomes, methods utilized to measure the outcome, and questions used to assess the outcome. This section highlights participant and evaluator comments in achieving the outcomes. Recommendations are also provided for each outcome.

#### *Outcome 1. Did the Mid-South Delta Leaders program recruit a diverse group of leaders to the program?*

The following is a summary of the demographics of those participants who responded to the Mid-South Delta Leaders Pre-Survey. Survey results show that as of July 2005 sixty percent of the respondents were female while forty percent were male. Twenty-two participants indicated they were African American, fourteen indicated Caucasian decent and three indicated other races/ethnicities such as Native American and Belizean-American. Most participants indicate being married.

Respondents were asked to classify their job or professional affiliation. The class members seem to represent several different professional arenas. Seventy percent of respondents have a college education. Table 1 summarizes all demographic statistics from the survey.

<b>Table 1. Demographics for MSDL Respondents</b>					
Variable	Frequency	Percent	Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Job</b>		
Male	15	38.50%	Faith-Based	3	7.70%
Female	24	61.50%	For-Profit	7	17.90%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			Higher Education	7	17.90%
African-American	22	56.40%	K-12 Education	3	7.70%
Caucasian	14	35.90%	Government	7	23.10%
Other	3	7.70%	Non-Profit	9	23.10%
<b>Marital Status</b>			Other	3	7.70%
Single	6	15.40%	<b>Education</b>		
Married	26	66.70%	High School Graduate	2	5.10%
Divorced	5	12.80%	Some College	5	12.80%
Widowed	2	5.10%	Associates Degree	3	7.70%
<b>Income</b>			Bachelor's Degree	15	38.50%
Less than \$15,000	2	5.10%	Professional Degree	14	35.90%
\$15-30,000	7	17.90%			
\$31-50,000	6	15.40%			
\$51-75,000	1	2.60%			
\$76,000 and above	7	17.90%			

N=39

Diversity can also be defined through the participants' activities and interests within their community. During the interview process class members were asked to discuss current community and Delta wide involvement. The following is a summary of the responses to further inform the diverse nature of these individuals.

In this process participants defined their community involvement in two ways. First, their community involvement was tied to their private life. Second, they tied their community work to current employment.

In regard to the private life, most participants cited involvement within their respective churches. Activities included youth development, working with the elderly, and various technical items such as televising the services. Participants are also highly active in national civic organizations such as the Rotary, Exchange, Pilot, and Kiwanis Clubs. They also cited participation in organizations such as the Red Cross, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Habitat for Humanity, and the American Cancer Society.

During the interview process many participants discussed activities and organizations that are locally based with few ties to county, state or national groups. Mostly these were community founded and funded groups. These activities include working at the local food pantry, community betterment groups (i.e. playground revitalization, beautification projects, festivals, etc.), and facilitating a neighborhood children's reading group. Participants also cited instances where they volunteer their professional services on a pro bono basis to the community. These activities include legal services and grant writing.

Next, many participants are highly involved in their local school district. Some belong or are leaders in formal groups such as the Parent Teachers Association. Others discussed their involvement more in terms of an active interest in the school system where they drop by the schools to see how the day is progressing. There are also some participants involved in after school programs. On a political level, several class members sit on educational committees within their community.

The local history, arts and culture were also cited as important activities among the class. Many are involved with tourism boards. In fact, two class members serve on the same board within their county. Others discussed involvement in activities to promote the arts. Furthermore, many participants cited involvement with organizing events for Black History Month within their communities.

Class members are also highly involved within the political arena. Activities include voter registration drives, active membership in a political party, running election campaigns and running for office. Many participants discussed the importance of understanding the political process and their desire to inform and engage others within their community.

Participation in activities surrounding economic development is also high among participants. Many are involved in their local Chamber of Commerce. Others serve on economic development committees, industrial park committees and foundations set up to serve the economic interest of the community.

When asked about their community involvement, many participants were careful to delineate between their personal community involvement and that involvement that is directly tied to their employment. These employment classified activities include affiliation with foundations such as the Kellogg Foundation through the Mid-South Delta Initiative and the Mid-South Delta Youth Initiative. Many are involved with national and state small business associations, technology councils, economic development committees, and executive boards for various organizations. Furthermore, there are three participants who currently serve as the mayor of their town and cited involvement in a host of activities that are directly tied to that position.

Given the demographic data as well as the varied interests of the participants, it appears the Mid-South Delta Leaders staff has recruited a diverse group of Delta participants. However, there are some areas that could be improved. The racial landscape of the Delta is rapidly changing with the influx of Latino workers. Past evaluation reports for the Mid-South Delta Leaders program have also pointed out this change with a recommendation to include Latino's in the program. Past evaluation reports have also pointed out potential language barriers to this task (Gumbel & Associates, 2005<sup>1</sup>).

Even taking these challenges into consideration, it is still recommended that some effort be made to include this population. There are agencies in the Delta that work with this group that have a sense of the needs without the language barriers. It is recommended that MSDL staff reach out to these organizations in the recruitment process.

***Outcome 2. Did the Mid-South Delta Leaders program create a forum for participants to share ideas?***

This outcome can be evaluated to some degree given three retreats are complete. To this point, the outcome has been assessed through the retreat evaluations and evaluator observation. Participants indicate through retreat evaluations that the opportunities for discussion have been useful and meaningful. In fact, many indicate on retreat evaluations that more time is needed for “unstructured” dialogue among participants.

This is encouraging as it appears that they do not feel the allotted time is sufficient. This comment is not meant in a negative sense, but just that participants are excited to meet with such a diverse group and have the opportunity to discuss Delta issues. It can also be assumed from these comments that participants feel a measure of safety in expressing their comments to this group as they wish they had more time for such activities.

Unstructured dialogue has only been one means of engaging participants. Even though retreat III occurred in program year 2006, it is important to mention observations from that retreat in regard to this outcome. Program staff and facilitators provided an invaluable dialogue experience during this meeting. Participants were divided into “consulting teams”. These teams were asked to take two areas of importance in the community/economic development process and present ideas for improving those areas. Presentations were then made to the class and to a panel of “experts” made up of program staff and guest facilitators.

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<sup>1</sup> Gumbel & Associates. 2005. “Mid-South Delta Leaders Year 2 Summative Evaluation Report.”

The mock consultant presentations forced participants to think critically and collaborate on their ideas. Participants not only had to develop creative solutions, but also present and defend their ideas. They had to answer “expert” questions regarding the practicality of their solutions. These hypothetical situations allowed participants a safe environment to share ideas and receive feedback from staff and fellow class members. By creating these situations, the Mid-South Delta Leaders staff is facilitating opportunities for an active, meaningful Delta dialogue.

***Outcome 3. To what extent has the Mid-South Delta Leaders participants increased their leadership skills and knowledge?***

Though it is still early in the MSDL curriculum process, the Retreat I evaluations, follow up comments on the Retreat II evaluation and comments from the interview process are used to tentatively explore this outcome.

First, Retreat I, “I am...You Are...” was used to highlight each participants leadership style. This retreat was also used to discuss working with those of differing leadership styles. The curriculum DISC was presented by Jim Corter to facilitate the learning process.

All class members state the curriculum of Retreat I provided a better understanding of their personal leadership styles, skills, and how to work with others with differing skills. The retreat evaluation showed that participants found the DISC material very useful in highlighting their leadership style. They also believe that as a result of the retreat they have a better understanding of how their skills can be useful within their community.

The pre-program interview process was conducted shortly after Retreat I. Participants frequently discussed how valuable it was to define their leadership style. Many stated the activities at the retreat allowed time to reflect on how leadership styles affect the collaborative process. Many cite they are more likely to consider their leadership style in relation to the style of others while working in their community.

During the evaluation process for Retreat II, participants were asked to share how, if at all, they used the material of Retreat I. The following is a selection of those comments to better illustrate the impact upon the participants leadership skills and styles.

- “I became more aware of my personality needs and was able to relate better and work better with others who have different styles.”
- “I have started using my personality style to compliment others when working in groups.”
- “I try to be more understanding of the different personality types when I work with other people.”
- I take more time to recognize other’s style of behavior/personality. I also try to have more understanding and appreciate opposing points of view.”
- “I have been much more conscientious of my staff and people in general in regard to their personality traits and how to relate to them.”

- “I have simply learned (or am learning) how to embrace my “personality” profile and that of others in my daily work.”

However, as pointed out by one participant, actually gauging impact may be difficult because as they state, “It helped tremendously although indirectly (no tangible differences).” But overall, it appears the MSDL curriculum has impacted how leaders think about leadership and begun to influence their leadership style and skills.

The final interviews with participants will further explore the impact on leadership styles and skills as well as how the understanding has impacted their effectiveness as leaders.

***Outcome 4. To what extent has the Mid-South Delta Leaders curriculum process and staff been successful in carrying out their purposes?***

This outcome has been measured in three ways thus far. First, through the retreat evaluations participants have provided information as to the overall effectiveness of the curriculum at the retreats. Next, interviews were conducted with the leadership team to discuss the collaboration process between universities. Finally, the evaluator, though not always in the role of evaluator, has been involved with this group since inception. Thus, has seen the evolution of the relationships since the beginning and can provide commentary.

During Retreat I participants were asked to respond to a leadership survey developed by Dr. Kenneth Pigg, University of Missouri—Columbia. As part of the survey, individuals were asked about how they learned of the Mid-South Delta Leaders program. Table 2 provides the recruitment summary.

Table 2. MSDL Recruitment Summary					
Variable	Frequency	Percent	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Program Staff	8	20.50%	Former Class Member	15	38.50%
Friend/Colleague	5	12.80%	News Release	6	15.40%
Website	2	5.10%	Other	3	7.70%

The best advertisement for MSDL, according to participants, appears to be former class members. Friends and colleagues, program staff and news releases appear to be the second most effective means of promoting the program.

Former participants’ recommending a program to colleagues is telling about the perceived effectiveness of a program. Obviously, Class I members believed the program curriculum and staff were of a certain quality to encourage others to set aside time to participate.

The Mid-South Delta Leaders program retreats I and II were rated well by participants. They generally concluded that the material and speakers were of high quality. Furthermore, participants were also favorable to the overall lodging arrangements. These are

telling signs of a quality program staff. Finally, recommendations given by the evaluation team to the program staff concerning retreat material, process and class member concerns were shown great attention and implemented where appropriate.

Several important points were made during the interview process. First, communication and the collaborative spirit are strong among the program partners. During the conversations all partners discussed the evolution of the working relationship. They feel they are able to share and express ideas openly—even in the realization that all may not agree with the viewpoint. One partner contributed this openness to the growing trust among the leadership team. Each team member discussed the open lines of communication. They feel they can contact any team member and receive a timely response. One member commented on the importance of not only the e-mail communication, but the “face to face” strategic planning sessions held periodically. The team member felt these were critical to the planning and team development process. These meetings were used as a time for vision setting, assessing where they are in the program and where they want to go in future.

Past evaluation reports (Gumbel & Associates 2005<sup>2</sup>) cite an expressed interest in team members to increase the role of the Arkansas and Louisiana partners in retreat delivery. Partners believe this has taken place through involvement with the issue based teams. Each coordinator leads one of these important teams.

As with any partnership there is always room for growth and improvement. Team members were asked to share areas they would like to see enhanced over the next year. First, one member stated they would like to invite officials from the respective universities to MSDL retreats. Furthermore, they would like to see a meeting between university presidents about this partnership. It was suggested that a dinner meeting may be an appropriate setting for such an event.

The partnership among the leadership team is healthy. They are comfortable with sharing dissenting ideas and are able to work through those proposals. The trust among the group is high according to the team members. Finally, in observing group meetings, this team works well together and this is, of course, beneficial for the program and its participants.

Opening the lines of communication among other university officials is an avenue program partners should pursue. It can only enhance the program to make others aware of the group and its intent. Finally, as an unintended, but noteworthy outcome, the coordinator from Louisiana made an interesting observation. With Grambling’s status as a historically black university, he noted past difficult in gaining entry to predominately white communities to promote the Mid-South Delta Leaders program. However, he noted that some of these communities are not so reluctant to respond to the program even given its links to Grambling. This is an important observation that should receive more attention from both the leadership team and evaluator in the future.

***Outcome 5. Does the Mid-South Delta Leaders program encourage participants to be civically engaged?***

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<sup>2</sup> Gumbel & Associates. 2005. “Mid-South Delta Leaders Year 2 Summative Evaluation Report.”

At this point in the evaluation process, only one of these sub-questions can be answered. During the interviews, participants were asked to characterize their current level of community and regional involvement. This question was asked to develop a baseline for pre-MSDL and post-MSDL involvement levels. Participants were also asked to estimate how many hours per week they spend in community activities. The average amount of time spent on community activities was 12.88 hours.

Participants were also asked, “In what ways are you currently serving the Delta region as a whole?” Many pondered this question and stated they believe they were not involved in any activities that serve the region. Others stated that they were involved with organizations that served “their part of the Delta” but nothing on a multi-state basis.

This question will be asked again during the post-interviews to determine if they are now more involved in the region as opposed to their local community. Class members will also be asked to share how they feel their involvement impacts the region.

Table 3 is a summary of responses to the pre-leadership survey. These measures assess readiness for civic engagement. This data will be used in conjunction with post-survey data to measure mean changes in these variables to also help measure this outcome.

Table 3. Civic Engagement				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel I could do as good a job in public office as most other people.	-----	10.30%	56.40%	33.30%
I think I am better informed about public issues and government than most people.	-----	30.80%	51.30%	17.90%
I am confident of my ability to work together with others to solve my community's problems.	-----	7.70%	33.30%	59.00%
I seek to forge connections and strengthen personal and professional bonds among members of my community.	-----	-----	64.10%	33.30%
I feel I have a good understanding of important public issues facing our community.	-----	7.70%	64.10%	25.60%

Most participants agree or strongly agree that they are knowledgeable and qualified to serve the community in leadership positions. However, there are those that, at this point, are less confident of their skills in the civic arena. Interview and post-survey data will help shed light on how the participants perceive civic engagement following the Mid-South Delta Leaders program.

**Outcome 6. To what extent has the Mid-South Delta Leaders program empowered participants to become engaged in economic and community initiatives?**

This outcome cannot be effectively measured until the participants have completed the Mid-South Delta Leaders curriculum.

However, the pre-leadership survey has provided baseline data. Three survey factors are related to this outcome. These factors include community knowledge, community commitment and shared future and purpose. Coupled with interview data, this data will be used to measure outcome six. Tables 4, 5 and 6 summarize the baseline data.

Table 4. Community Knowledge				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have knowledge of local, county, regional and state resources.	2.60%	7.70%	74.40%	15.40%
I understand my community's structure and dynamics.	-----	12.80%	59.00%	28.20%
I know about the history of my community.	2.60%	17.90%	56.40%	23.10%
I am aware of all the needs of my community.	7.70%	35.90%	46.20%	10.30%
I understand the implications of local issues.	-----	17.90%	51.30%	30.80%
I know how to change things in my community.	-----	23.10%	64.10%	12.80%

The program seeks to empower participants. During the interview process participants were asked to give their definition of empowerment. Many cited increased knowledge as a definition of empowerment. Thus, this indicator will be used to help assess this outcome. As outlined in the chart, there are those that do not feel they have knowledge of their community and its issues. An increase in knowledge may influence how they approach community and economic development activities.

Table 5 summarizes results pertaining to the community commitment factor. It is theorized that an increase in community commitment will lead to an increase in active engagement in community and economic development activities.

Table 5. Community Commitment			
	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have pride in my community.	5.10%	38.50%	56.40%

I value the contributions that others make in my community.	-----	41.00%	59.00%
I strive to make this community a better place for everyone.	-----	48.70%	51.30%
I have a sense of community ownership.	10.30%	56.40%	33.30%
I have a sense of belonging in my community.	10.30%	74.40%	15.40%
I strive to improve the quality of life in my community.	-----	46.20%	53.80%

A majority of participants indicate that they are committed to their community. However, there is room for improvement. Program theory suggests that an increase in commitment will result in an increased activity in community and economic development activities.

Finally, the Mid-South Delta Leaders program, by its very goals, strives to foster conversation to cultivate a vision for the Delta region. By defining this vision, it is theorized that participants will become more involved in community and economic development activities. Table 6 outlines the results of the shared future and purpose factor among participants.

Table 6. Shared Future and Purpose	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I talk optimistically about the future of my community.	5.10%	38.50%	56.40%
I envision exciting new possibilities for my community.	2.60%	35.90%	61.50%
I work at developing new leaders within my community.	7.70%	66.70%	25.60%
I can overcome obstacles and challenges to get things done.	2.60%	59.00%	38.50%
I have confidence that my community will achieve its goals.	17.90%	61.50%	20.50%
I understand how trust in each other can help overcome difficulties in my community.	5.10%	51.30%	43.60%
I articulate a convincing vision for the future of my community.	10.30%	64.10%	20.50%
I actively express my ideas and opinions about my community.	12.80%	48.70%	38.50%

I believe the region can change.	2.60%	51.30%	46.20%
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Future evaluation procedures will also contribute to assessing this outcome.

***Outcome 7. To what extent do Mid-South Delta Leaders program participants utilize the resources and networks created by the program process?***

This outcome cannot be effectively measured until the participants have completed the MSDL curriculum process. But, once again, the pre-survey data is telling in terms of how participants characterize their current regional networks. Table 4 summarizes those results.

Table 4. Networks				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a regional network.	2.60%	43.60%	43.60%	10.30%
I have an understanding of Delta issues.	2.60%	15.40%	71.80%	10.30%
I have networks with state and regional political leaders.	10.30%	25.60%	43.60%	20.50%
I have a network with diverse individuals.	-----	12.80%	51.30%	35.90%
I feel comfortable in discussions with those of different backgrounds.	2.60%	-----	51.30%	46.20%

Currently, approximately fifty percent of participants feel they do not have a usable regional network. Furthermore, some participants feel they do not have networks with their state and national political leaders. These are areas directly addressed by MSDL and will continue to be evaluated.

**4. Use of Evaluation Results:**

The Mid-South Delta Leaders program is progressing toward achieving the set outcomes. Program staff has recruited a diverse group of leaders to participate in Class II. They are not only diverse in terms of demographic data, but also in their scope of interest. But, as noted in the report, outreach should occur to organizations which serve Latino populations to begin understanding issues facing this new and increasing Delta population.

In terms of creating a forum to share ideas, MSDL has successfully achieved this on numerous occasions through its weekend retreats. Participants have commented on these interactions in a positive manner. Furthermore, activities facilitated in sessions have allowed for creative brainstorming in regard to Delta issues and solutions. The continuation of this trend is highly encouraged.

Class II participants have noted increased awareness to not only their personal leadership style, but also recognizing the styles of colleagues. During evaluation activities participants discussed how they implemented the knowledge garnered at the retreat. Thus, MSDL is well on its way to meeting this program outcome.

Retreats were well received and rated by participants. The responsive nature of program staff to participant issues and needs is a marker to meeting outcome five. In addition to the positive feedback from Class II, former class member continue to recommend the program to others. This is a direct measure of the effectiveness of the curriculum and program staff. Former class members would not encourage colleagues to spend valuable time on this process if they did not feel it was beneficial. From interviews conducted with the leadership team, it appears the relationship is healthy and progressing.

Baseline data helps inform outcomes five through seven. Future evaluation activities will actually measure these outcomes.

Retreat surveys, observation and post interviews will be conducted in 2006. However, there are concerns over the timeline of evaluation activities for 2006. Class II is scheduled to end during the summer of 2006. Final interviews are tentatively scheduled during the months of August and September to ensure enough time for data analysis and inclusion in the 2006 final report. Thus, participants will only be out of the program for approximately 2-3 months.

It is the feeling of the evaluation team that this is not enough time to truly measure important impact outcomes regarding sustaining networks created through the program and perceived impact of the program. Ideally, the final interviews would be conducted one year following the conclusion of the class. But, given time constraints and reporting needs, the ideal is not possible.

However, it is recommended that the final interviews take place six months following “graduation”. This would mean final *interview* data for Class II would not be reported until 2007. The 2006 report would include data and analysis from the pre/post survey process, all individual retreat evaluations, evaluations from the Delta Issues Summit, Delta Heritage Tour, State Capital Tours as well as data from two focus groups. Thus, the only missing piece in evaluating class II would be the post-interviews. This recommendation, of course, must be carefully weighed by both program staff and the funding agency.

**B. Goal # 2 – Mississippi Delta Technology Council** The mission of The Mississippi Delta Technology Council is:

*To enhance the strengths of the Delta by promoting, celebrating and leveraging successful applications of technology.*

**1. Institutional Goal which was supported by this goal:**

*SP#5: The citizens of the region will benefit from increases in university outreach, service and partnership initiatives.*

## **2. Evaluation Procedure(s):**

Evaluation efforts focus on the accomplishment of the MDTC goals:

- To dissolve the “low tech” image of the Delta;
- To play a role in the economic growth of the Delta – in growing, improving, attracting, developing and retaining businesses regionally;
- To foster entrepreneurial efforts and to foster lucrative networking;
- To market the Delta through regional, state and national publications; and,
- To play a positive and integral role in job creation in the Mississippi Delta.

The evaluation of these goals is based on the accomplishment of the following strategies:

1. *Implementation of the Certified Technology Communities initiative;*
2. *Completion of the comprehensive MDTC web-portal;*
3. *Production of a marketing video, which highlights the existing tech infrastructure of the Delta;*
4. *Recognition and strengthening of the existing partnerships and development of new ones;*
5. *Recognition and leveraging of the current membership as well as increasing the memberships.*

## **3. Actual Results of Evaluation:**

*The five strategies are scheduled to be accomplished during the 2005-2006 program year. The results will be used to strengthen and improve the strategies.*

## **4. Use of Evaluation Results:**

| *The results collected will be used to develop future goals and strategies for MDTC.*

C. **Goal # 3 -- Economic and Community Development for Public Officials and Community Leaders:** to implement a pilot program in which the partners work closely with two communities to develop an economic development plan.

### **1. Institutional Goal which was supported by this goal:**

*SP#5: The citizens of the region will benefit from increases in university outreach, service and partnership initiatives.*

### **2. Evaluation Procedure(s):**

As a method of evaluation of the accomplishments of the pilot program thus far, the original outcomes in the proposal are listed. Each outcome has a statement that the partners agree indicates the status at this time.

1. Successful selection of pilot communities and formation of the community team of public officials and community leaders. (Accomplished)
2. Two communities will commit to an intensive economic development process and create a community economic development plan. (Accomplished)
3. Quarterly reports will be prepared to measure progress toward the achievement of the economic development goals established by the community. (Will be done in the upcoming year)
4. An economic champion for each goal will be identified to lead the progress toward achievement of the goal. (Accomplished)
5. Each community will develop a cadre of well-informed citizens who will participate in an economic development activity. (Ongoing)
6. The partners will develop a formal evaluation plan to assess the success of the pilot program. (Ongoing)
7. A case study on economic development in the Mississippi Delta will be developed by the partners. Economic development tools, which can be utilized by other communities, will be developed. (Ongoing)

### **3. Actual Results of Evaluation:**

The process to select the communities was intense and required individual meetings with key leaders before any group meetings could be held. The partners determined that they would look for a community and/or county that had already expressed a desire to succeed and that this would not be viewed as a program that was imposed on the community. The partners were methodical about talking to private and public leaders from perspective locations. Intensive work was done with one community which decided that the timing was not right for that community to participate in the program. At that time, the selection process was started again to approach another community about its interest in this initiative. Even though this was time consuming, it was necessary for a successful

foundation to insure the program would move forward upon the completion of the retreat and the development of the economic strategic plan.

The community and the county were selected and a retreat, facilitated by Phil Hardwick with the John C. Stennis Institute of Government, was held with each one. The Mississippi Delta was represented geographically with the county in the northern part of the Delta and the city in the Southern part of the Delta. A community profile was developed for each community by the Delta Council Economic Development Department, and a sample of each profile is attached to this report. A copy of the profile was given to each person at the retreat, and the information was used to assist with data collection, assets identification and demographics of the community. All of the participants commented on how beneficial and useful the profile was as they developed the economic development goals for their community or county.

#### **4. Use of Evaluation Results:**

##### **Lessons Learned During the 2005-2006 Pilot Program**

1. The methods utilized in the selection process need more than a 12 month period to implement, particularly for a pilot program involving three partners.
2. Getting commitment and bringing the local leaders together in agreement takes time. The partners recognize that each location has its own set of issues, turf barriers and land mines that must be handled effectively before engaging the broader community.
3. Even after the intense selection process, the stated commitment of local leaders and the identification of champions for each economic goal, it is difficult to hold volunteers accountable for the accomplishments of the outcome of the goal.
4. The partnership has proven to have a successful one with certain advantages. The partner that is not a resident of the Delta does not know the issues within the community and county. Therefore, Phil Hardwick brings a set of expertise that is not influenced by local concerns. He serves in the role of an outside consultant that brings new ideas and challenges local thinking. The two local partners are aware of many of the complexities in each location. Thus, two local partners are trusted in the region and bring the ability to make the connections with the appropriate organizations and leaders.
5. The partners first worked with staff in the local organizations to assist with evaluation and assessment of the accomplishment of the goals. This method has not proven satisfactory so it is now believed that community volunteers should be the primary contact to determine the achievement of the goals.

**IV. Data and information for department: The *Special Projects* department operates through several grant funded projects as well as coordinates special events on the DSU campus. Special events include Delta Council Day, the Year of Cleveland, The Women's Leadership Conference**

**Grants:**

**-Mid-South Delta Leaders (2002-2008), Funded by Mid-South Delta Initiative/W.K. Kellogg Foundation for \$1.2 million**

**-Mississippi Delta Technology Council (2004-2007), Funded by Small Business Administration for \$247,369**

**- Economic Development for Public Officials in the Mississippi Delta (2005-2007), a pilot program funded by the Robert M. Hearin Support Foundation for \$184,000**

**Top Five Accomplishments for 2005-2006 Year**

1. Served as lead staff support for the celebration of Delta State University's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary which was designated as the Year of Cleveland. A series of successful events involving the Cleveland community and DSU campus were held to honor the decades of good relations between the University and the Cleveland community.
2. Received funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to host a Delta Youth-in- Action retreat in partnership with the University of Michigan. A total of seven teams with 28 youth from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas spent a weekend on campus developing leadership skills and evaluation training.
3. Received funding from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation for an economic development for public officials in the Mississippi Delta program in partnership with the Development Office of Delta Council and the John C. Stennis Institute of Government at Mississippi State University. Two communities have been selected and are involved in this program presently, Coahoma County and Indianola.
4. Requested by the Board of Directors to assume the leadership role as the Executive Director of the Mississippi Delta Technology Council. Was successful in overcoming problematic issues with a SBA grant so that it is now funding the work as originally proposed.
5. Senior Administrator Special Projects appointed by the Speaker of the House to serve as a member of the Delta Revitalization Task Force.

**V. Personnel: Dr. Myrtis Tabb, Senior Administrator Special Projects**

**Noteworthy activities and accomplishments:**

- Appointed Executive Director of the Mississippi Delta Technology Council, funded by the Small Business Administration;
- Selected as State Coordinator of the Women in Higher Education Mississippi Network (WHEMN), a group committed to identifying, developing, advancing and supporting women's leadership in higher education;
- Served as Program Leader of the Economic Development for Public Officials in the Mississippi Delta, a program funded by the Robert M. Hearin Support Foundation;
- Taught Leadership Development in Theory and Practice, Sociology 424/624;
- Appointed as an Advisory Board Member for Merchants & Farmers Bank;
- Received an economic development scholarship from the Mississippi Development Authority;
- Recognized by the Ladies of Elegance for Community Leadership;
- Received the Cleveland/Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce President's Award;
- Served as Staff Chair of the DSU Year of Cleveland Steering Committee;
- Inducted into DSU Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa; and,
- Appointed to serve on the Mississippi Delta Region Revitalization Task Force.

**New position(s) requested, with justification:** N/A

**Recommended change of status**

*(such as promotion/tenure/change in responsibilities):*

**VI. Division/Department Goals for Coming Year**

*All Programs in Special Projects Department focus on SP#5: The citizens of the region will benefit from increases in university outreach, service and partnership initiatives.*

*Note: The goals for each of our programs are defined when we apply for a grant. The goals extend from year to year for the life of the grant. For example, with MSDL, we are funded through 2008. We have the same goals from year to year, because our classes repeat.*

**A. Goal # 1 – Mid-South Delta Leaders Program**

- Empower participants to become actively engaged in community initiatives and to use the available resources and talents;
- Include both traditional and non-traditional leaders in creative learning environments;

- Build regional networks of resources through participants and graduates to help Delta communities improve their economic position;
- Equip leaders with better understandings of national and global trends and how these trends influence the quality of life and community development in the tri-state Mississippi Delta;
- Link leaders with other educational programs and action strategies; and,
- Help leaders develop life goal plans and community development projects.

**B. Goal # 2 – Mississippi Delta Technology Council**

MDTC will continue to work with local and regional leaders from all sectors to develop the infrastructure that is essential to the success of a region in the knowledge economy. This includes ensuring that the human capital of the Delta is prepared for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that the resources of the region are sufficient for the knowledge economy and that the quality of life in the Delta remains high enough to recruit and retain the best and brightest.

**C. Goal # 3 -- Economic and Community Development for Public Officials and Community Leaders**

This program is a pilot program in which the partners will work closely with two communities in the Mississippi Delta to help them develop economic development plans. The strength of this program is the collaboration between and synergy of the three partners to focus on an intensive economic development technical assistance program with two communities. Initial work has begun with the two communities that were selected for the program, Coahoma County and Indianola.