



## Steering Committee Member Roles and Expectations

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### A Diverse Network with a Single Goal

Started in late 2008, The St. Louis Regional College Access Pipeline Project, now referred to as St. Louis Graduates, is a network of diverse but like-minded individuals focused on a single goal:

50% of adults in the St. Louis region will have a post-secondary degree in 2020.

The work of St. Louis Graduates is done by individuals representing college access providers, K-12 educators, higher education administrators, business and philanthropic leaders. The strength of the network lies in its ability to harness deep experience; embrace multiple viewpoints; pool resources; and work for the collective good. Collaboration, rather than competition, is a core value.

### A Network Mind-Set

At its inception, St. Louis Graduates made the decision to adopt a network mind-set as described in “Forces for Good” (Crutchfield and Grant, 2008). The network-mindset is best understood through comparison to an organizational mind-set.

	Organization Orientation	Network Orientation
Mind-set	Competition	Collaboration
Strategy for impact	Grow the organization	Grow the network or field
Typical Behaviors	Compete for scarce resources Protect knowledge Develop competitive advantage Hoard talented leadership Act alone Seize credit and power	Grow the funding pie for all Share knowledge Develop skills of competitors Cultivate and disperse leadership Act collectively Share credit and power
Structure	Centralized	Decentralized



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Accepting an invitation to join the St. Louis Graduates Steering Committee means that you must be willing to adopt a set of behaviors that support a network orientation when doing the work of St. Louis Graduates. At first, this shift can seem challenging. There is ample evidence within our St. Louis Graduates community, however, to show that the network approach is beneficial in “growing the pie” for all. Through our collective activities we have:

- Increased our total resources AND increased our impact
- Shared skills and knowledge through peer exchanges
- Enhanced the social and professional connections at all levels (from service providers to Steering Committee members)
- Expanded the reach of St. Louis Graduates by connecting to other coalitions and groups whose goals align with our own

### GettingWorkDone

#### What we do

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
Build the region’s capacity to help students access and persist to a postsecondary degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Development Institute</li> <li>• Lunch &amp; Learns</li> </ul>
Encourage coordination of services provided to youth and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Development Institute</li> <li>• Lunch &amp; Learns</li> <li>• Service Coordination/Mapping of services</li> <li>• Higher Education Coalition</li> <li>• Scholarship Central/Common Application</li> <li>• Searchable Database of Service Providers</li> </ul>
Build public understanding of the issues for first-generation and low-income students and how to remove barriers to postsecondary degree completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Outcomes and Definitions Committee</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.StLouisGraduates.org">www.StLouisGraduates.org</a></li> <li>• Communications/Public Will Building</li> <li>• Report Card – updated every three years</li> <li>• Advocacy Committee</li> </ul>
Advocate for policies that support college access and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy Committee</li> </ul>
Increase awareness of need for and benefits of a college educated population in region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications/Public Will Building</li> </ul>



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### Who we are

St. Louis Graduates accomplishes its work through a structure that is both flexible and self-organizing. To date, the primary roles have been:

- Co-chairs
- Steering Committee Members
- Other stakeholders engaged through ongoing e-communications and once a year forum
- Project Manager
- Consultants (hired for specific technical expertise or projects)

While there is no formal limit on the number of Steering Committee members, the intention is to maintain the number at a level that allows both full participation and effective decision making. We do not expect the number of Steering Committee members to exceed 15-20.

The composition of the Steering Committee is expected to change over time based upon the need for specific types of functional expertise or background. We believe that a balance of perspectives and experience will enhance St. Louis Graduates' ability to meet our goal. The ideal Steering Committee is composed of individuals who are drawn from many backgrounds: college access service providers; higher education; k-12 administration; philanthropic institutions; business and enterprise.

### When we meet

The full St. Louis Graduates Steering Committee meets approximately four times per year. Meeting dates are scheduled well in advance and are typically 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. on a Friday. Most meetings are held at the Scholarship Foundation offices in Clayton. Steering Committee members are expected:

- To attend at least three meetings per year
- To attend in person or by conference call (i.e. not to delegate it to another)
- To prepare for discussion by reading the agenda and other materials before the meeting
- To participate fully and respectfully in discussions and activities
- To serve on or lead a committee, if asked

Individuals who cannot fulfill these expectations will be invited to support the work of St. Louis Graduates in a different capacity, such as co-chairing a committee, working on an ad hoc committee, etc.



### Committee Work

Steering Committee meetings are primarily used for updates, planning and strategic decision making. Like other boards, much of St. Louis Graduates' hands-on work is conducted by individuals and committees. Committees may be comprised of Steering Committee members, community members and specialist talent (such as consultants).

Committees are led, or co-led by a Steering Committee member. They take general direction from, and report results to, the Steering Committee. In all other ways they are autonomous. Most committees are ad hoc being created for a specific purpose and then disbanded upon completion of that purpose. Committees formed are episodic, rooted in a goal in plan, and work/goal based.

### Leadership Roles

The St. Louis Graduates Steering Committee is led by Co-Chairs, who represent different perspectives and backgrounds. These roles are currently held by Faith Sandler (The Scholarship Foundation, a Service Provider) and Jane Donahue (The Deaconess Foundation, a community funder). This co-leader design has been an important factor in ensuring inclusion of multiple perspectives and offers the group stability in leadership approach.

The responsibility of the Co-Chairs is to provide overall direction and leadership to the Steering Committee and to be the primary contact for the St. Louis Graduates Project Manager and consulting firms. In general, the Co-Chairs are the "voice" of St. Louis Graduates and represent it to the media, at conferences and with potential grant-makers.

To date, St. Louis Graduates has been primarily a self-organizing system. Because we are guided by a single goal, it is often clear "who" is best suited to accomplish a given task. Steering Committee members are expected to "raise their hand" when they feel that they are particularly well-suited to accomplish a task or lead a committee. In addition, all Steering Committee members are asked to participate in various ways by the Co-Chairs. As the St. Louis Graduates circle grows, there may be more need for formalized structure.

