

Understanding the Culture of Civic Action and Engagement at Stockton University

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Introduction to the Campus Compact Civic Action Plan

College and university campuses and their leadership across the country were charged in March, 2016 by National Campus Compact to sign the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Commitments and Action Statement. Dr. Harvey Kesselman, President of Stockton University, did not hesitate to sign this document; Stockton was a founding member of the New Jersey Campus Compact, and has valued for many years the Campus Compact perspectives and models offered on the national, regional, and state level.

Our vision is to create a shared dialogue within the institution about what civic action and

always had a tradition of engaging students in community work and, in recent years, has expanded students' access to the research, planning, and implementation of projects that affect their communities.

Approach

Institutional Baseline – What are your assets?

1. Describe the existing engagement infrastructure on your campus. How do you already support community engagement?
2. What current plans or planning efforts should the Civic Action Plan connect with?
3. How is your college or university serving as an anchor institution in the community?
4. How are the five Action Statement commitments currently being addressed on your campus?
5. What existing data do you have that may allow you to create benchmarks in relation to the five commitments?

Community Baseline – What are your assets?

1. Describe the existing engagement infrastructure in the community. What are the key assets in the community?
2. What current collective impact efforts exist that the Civic Action Plan should connect with?
3. Who are the key private, nonprofit, and government organizations that are already partners or that could be?
4. What is the focus of community development efforts? Are there specific commitments that collaborative efforts are targeting?
5. What existing data do you have or can you access that could create benchmarks in relation to the five commitments/community-identified priorities?

Planning Team – Drivers of change and connectors

1. Who will be on your team?
2. What positions this group to see the big picture at the institution and in the community?
3. What gives your team the necessary perspective, persistence, and power to make lasting change?
4. What are the expectations of team members and of the team as a whole?
- 5.

infrastructure, our community and institutional assets, and our planning team and stakeholders. Stockton University is already living the elements of the Action Statement commitments² and our Civic Action Plan will focus our efforts on communicating and providing access to all the ways our institution is engaged in South Jersey.

The History of the University in South Jersey

administrative unit for faculty members. Within these divisions, which was to be composed of a group of related academic disciplines, faculty members would be encouraged to work together across disciplinary lines. The work of the academic disciplines was assigned to programs, which were to be headed by program coordinators—faculty members who were elected, on a yearly basis, by their peers into a program management role. The idea behind this structure was that it would create an environment for innovative and flexible ways to deliver education. One of the guiding principles of the founders was that Stockton was to be exclusively an undergraduate college, with a heavy emphasis on the liberal arts and only a few selected professional degree programs.

Responding to the needs of the setting, Stockton is now a much more complex and mature institution. Applications for admission are strong, and selection criteria are significantly more rigorous than they were in the earlier years. As of Fall 2017, there are 8,275 undergraduate students in 30 major programs of study. Graduate education has been introduced, and there are now 874 graduate students enrolled in 8 different master's degree programs (American Studies, Communication Disorders, Computational Science, Criminal Justice, Education, Business Administration, Environmental Science, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Instructional Technology, Nursing, Social Work and Occupational Therapy) and two doctoral degree programs (Physical Therapy and Education in Organizational Leadership). In 2015, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey followed the recommendations of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and became Stockton University.

Existing Culture and Infrastructure of Civic Action and Engagement

Stockton University has had an infrastructure for supporting civic action and engagement since its founding. These values that were embedded in Stockton's culture at the onset were codified when it received, in the early 1990's, a Learn and Serve grant to establish the Service-Learning Program. For over 20 years, Service-Learning has connected the South Jersey community to Stockton academics through service-learning projects. In 2012, the Stockton Center for Community Engagement (SCCE) was established through a Presidential Initiatives Committee. The SCCE has enabled the university to expand on partnerships with our community in mutually beneficial ways, creating relationships that have endured for five years.

In the last 10 years, the college has expanded its civic focus into the community by creating centers that provide research and support for older adults, the casino and tourism industry, and public policy. It was a founding member of the American Democracy Project (ADP) out of the American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU). This is a network of more than 250 state colleges and universities focused on public higher education's role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy. The institute's participation in community events, creation of homegrown community programs, and numerous requests for future projects, in conjunction with the planning of a new campus in Atlantic City, presents the

opportunity to solidify our role as an anchor institution and create a single guiding plan to show our commu

and recognize opportunities in problem-solving, relationships, or self-
and collaboration -- defined as
global awareness

teamwork
and
5

In addition to the strategic plan and mission statement, Stockton's commitment to the principles in the action statement can be found through a visible presence at Open House sessions about the role that engaged learning plays at Stockton, resulting in applicants' first impression as one of engagement and service. Student transcripts note every semester a student takes a service-learning course, listed as GEN3851 -- Service-Learning Experience, so that future employers or graduate schools will understand the student's level of commitment to civic engagement. The Career Services offices encourage students to add service-learning experiences to their resumé.

Internally, the language of faculty promotion and tenure policies require faculty to incorporate service in their classroom, teaching and research. Academic Handbook 6.3.1. "Service to students, college, discipline, and community is essential for the development and growth of academe. Hence, significant service at the program, school, and college-wide levels is mandatory for tenure and promotion. Therefore, faculty candidates should engage in service to their department and school, serve on college committees and task forces, demonstrate service to their discipline and profession, and engage in community service."⁶ Though this does not specifically note scholarship of engagement as Ernest Boyer⁷ defines it, the policy is foundational for moving forward in addressing tenure and promotion opportunities.

Many of our faculty, and more recently, many of our junior faculty, are involved in scholarship of engagement. The University regularly supports the efforts of faculty to do research, conduct scholarship, and engage in professional development activities that focus on the community. For instance, each school of the college provides financial support to the faculty 0 G3p(nc)491.63 f1 0 /(nd)-9(mortu

In addition, for over 15 years we have been preparing Students for engaged citizenship, particularly through the American Democracy Project initiatives such as the Political Engagement Project and the Economic Inequality. Additional opportunities include service-learning courses such as GEN 2646 Tools for Social Change and GEN 2484 Perspectives on Civic Engagement and clubs/organizations such as Coalition for Civic Engagement and Coalition for Women's Rights.

We embrace our responsibility of place by developing our anchor institution mission as we build a new campus in Atlantic City. Our responsibilities include supporting the communities surrounding our satellite locations including Manahawkin, Hammonton, and Woodbine.

Consequently, Stewardship of Place has been an initiative via AASCU (American Association of State College & Universities) that the university has been involved in for a number of years. This ongoing initiative is an area where faculty are trained to have the essential qualities of being "place-related," "interactive," "mutually beneficial" and "integrated."

Institutional Capacity has expanded from our centers and offices focused on community outreach and education to receiving annual engagement reports from programs across the university. Our growth pote

from the Individual (including all identifying characteristics) to the Macro system (attitudes and ideologies of the culture)

2,412 students—or 150%. The Office of Service-Learning has also increased their ratio of students earning GENS3851: Service-Learning Experience to their academic transcript to the general student body per semester from 1:11 during the 2012-13, to 1:8 during the 2016-17 year.

During the same period, the number of faculty who are incorporating civic engagement into their classrooms has more than doubled, and the total number of service hours completed is now 55,240 in collaboration with 123 community partners. Faculty members interested in creating service-learning courses or inserting service-learning into an existing course are encouraged to meet and have a consultation with the service-learning team. The office holds structured

Spring Break, and Days of Leadership. The office also tracks the service hours of the fraternities and sororities on campus which totaled 8,455 hours for AY 2015-2016.

Stockton as a Collaborative Anchor Institution

Stockton pairs a physical presence in the arts and sciences, social services, and business communities with our faculty and staff's participation in local affairs to establish ourselves as an anchor institution in South Jersey. The Stockton Performing Arts Center in Galloway the Arts Garage in Atlantic City, and the Noyes Museum in Hammonton have become influential cultural centers which attract artists and patrons from across the state and country. Stockton's Marine Science Field Station in Port Republic houses the Coastal Research Center which participates in regional-scale coastal zone management, development, and environmental & economic issues. It is becoming involved in larger coastal zone management studies and data collection projects related to federal and state regulations and engineering project planning and decision-making.

The Child Welfare Education Institute is a statewide resource for the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, which supports the ongoing transformation of the public child welfare system through social work education and professional training. Stockton's Small Business Development Center is housed in the Carnegie Library in Atlantic City and is part of a networked national partnership between state and federal government, the private sector, and higher education. The program is designed to provide the highest quality business assistance services to establish new enterprises and promising start-ups, with the objective of increased economic activity.

Stockton faculty, administration, and staff have taken highly visible roles in local government, and on the boards of major non-profits and community development organizations. The faculty serve the community through their teaching offerings, scholarship, helping organize consortia of agencies and bringing funding into the community. Additionally, faculty, administration and staff serve on boards, and provide leadership to local, national, and international organizations. Students also serve, as many local agencies would not be able to provide their broad array of services to the community if it were not for the participation of students in helping to organize and maintain community programs such as the Campus Kitchen at Atlantic City held at the Atlantic City High School and the Hopeful Grounds Pop-Up Cafe at the Atlantic City Rescue Mission.

Stockton serves as an anchor institution in many collective impact efforts in Atlantic City currently, including the SCCE's Homework Completion Programs, which are in collaboration with the Municipal Planning Board, the City of Atlantic City, the Atlantic City Police Department, the Atlantic City Housing Authority, and the Atlantic City School District. Additionally, Stockton works directly with individual organizations such as AtlantiCare Behavioral Health, Family Service Association, Atlantic Prevention Resources, and Atlantic City

Rescue Mission in Atlantic County, Ocean Mental Health in Ocean County, Cape Counseling Services in Cape May County, and the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New

members, administrators, staff from the University Relations and Marketing department and the Division of Student Affairs, and students. The entire plan is shepherded by the Stockton University President, Dr. Harvey Kesselman, who also co-chairs the New Jersey Campus Compact with other college and university presidents throughout the State of New Jersey.

In order to ensure that stakeholder voices beyond the planning team are heard, team members have met with the Provost, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Dean of General Studies, the Director of Human Resources, staff from the Office of Institutional Research, the President of the Faculty Senate, and the Vice President of Administration and Finance, as well as community partners, and a representative sample of faculty from across the Schools to collect broad perspectives on the university's strengths and challenges in its engagement activities. The results of these interviews showed that our internal and external community feels we are extensively engaged in our community but engagement opportunities are not widely known to students, faculty, and staff. Many faculty, administrators and staff were interviewed addressing key issues of "communication is problematic" and "unclear procedure" continued to come up as the key theme of our conversations. This has informed the writing of this plan and helped to create its focal point - an overall vision that includes collectively promoted language, a communication campaign, and a virtual portal as a point of entry for civic action and engagement.

The team, as a whole, has the collective ability to see the big picture at the institution. They hold key positions that promote the culture of engagement by allocating resources (e.g., financial support and/or human capacity) to create and expand engagement activities. The plan that is constructed with the team's consultation will be implemented by the co-chair and the University Relations and Marketing department in accord with the Campus Compact commitments made by President Kesselman.

Team Leader Biographies

Dr. Merydawilda Colón, PhD, LSW, was born in Puerto Rico and

In 2001, she joined the faculty at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. She served as Coordinator of the Social Work Program from 2007 to 2014, and became the Executive Director of the Stockton Center for Community Engagement in 2014. Merydawilda is a tenured Professor of Social Work.

Merydawilda serves the community as the Chair of the Youth and Social Service Sub-committee for the Atlantic City and Pleasantville Municipal Planning Board. She is a member of the Human Rights Committee for Career Opportunity Development, Inc. She is a board member of the Pleasantville Police Foundation and a member of the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns, Access to Courts Subcommittee. She is a member of the Coalition for Safe Community and serves as a pro bono advisor to various organizations. Merydawilda's primary research interest is hospice use by Latinos, and her publications appear in journals such as the *American Journal of Hospice & Palliative Medicine* and the *Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care*.

Daniel Fidalgo Tomé earned his Bachelor of Science in Environmental Policy, Institutions and

civic engagement activities ¹⁴		the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.	<p>programs and Student Development</p> <p>Enrollment data for each Service-Learning course</p>	<p>Increased number of Service-Learning courses available to students</p> <p>Increased number of students enrolled in Service-Learning courses</p> <p>Increased number of students in the SCCE activity logs</p>
Coordinate efforts across the University to better facilitate civic engagement institutionally, ending duplication and redundancy of services and creating a campus-wide culture of civic engagement	Structure	<p>#4 We harness the capacity of our institutions – through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice – to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.</p> <p>#5 We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high</p>	<p>Increased amount of office space for both OSL and SCCE, and space that in proximity to each other to maximize resources and coordination across divisions and the community</p> <p>Procedural guidelines focused on how we maximize internal communications</p>	<p>Increase in office space, that is in proximity of major partners, fiscal resources and human capacity</p> <p>Increase in the number of undergraduate experiential learning experiences available to students</p> <p>Increase in number of academic programs with embedded service-learning /civic engagement added to an existing core course</p> <p>Promoting civic engagement in the e-Portfolio assessment rubric</p>

¹⁴ Based on current Office of Service-Learning and Center for Community Engagement data

		expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.		
Increase the number of formalized partnerships and collaborations throughout the campus that focus on civic action and engagement	Coordination	#4 We harness the capacity of our institutions – through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice – to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.	The number of formalized partnerships and collaborations that include agreements or receive funding initiatives internally or externally	Increase in collaborations that receive funding Increased affiliation agreements with external community partners
Increased use of language, brand and virtual portal of civic action and engagement	Culture	#5 We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to	Number of times portal is clicked Observation within annual reports of language used around civic action and engagement	Consistent use of branded language focused on civic action and engagement by all members of the community Measurable number of times the virtual portal is accessed

		their achievement.		
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Sustainable Capacity Development

1. How will you increase the capacity of faculty, students, and staff to engage effectively with communities beyond the campus?
2. How will you build your institution's capacity to support partnerships?

To capitalize on the

<p>constructive/reflective comments from Day of Scholarship Receive feedback from colleagues and consider perspectives based on conversations/dialogues</p>		<p>Tome and Dr. Merydawilda Colon</p>	
<p>Start to collect each piece necessary for successful orientations (materials/presentation schedules/training schedules/ online timeline social media/newsletters/website/posters/flyers/ etc.)</p>	<p>May 2017- August 2017</p>	<p>Center for Community Engagement and Office of Service-Learning</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>Present Civic Action Plan at the Civic Leadership & Democratic Engagement National Meeting in Baltimore.</p>	<p>June 2017</p>	<p>Daniel Fidalgo Tome and Dr. Meryawilda Colon :Receive feedback from colleagues and consider perspectives based on conversations/dialogues.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

<p>Start presentations of Stockton Civic Action Plan Communication Campaign</p>	<p>July 2017</p>	<p>Team @ Orientation Presentations/ presentations at summer institutes/ be present for open house events/ start first phase of online marketing and hand out flyers/posters to prospective and new students-</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>Continue presentations of Stockton Civic Action Plan Communication Campaign</p>	<p>Aug. 2017</p>	<p>Team Presentations at trainings for Athletes, Residential Life, New Faculty Orientation, Adjunct Dinner, second phase of online marketing, posters up on campus</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Continue presentations of Stockton Civic Action Plan Communication Campaign</p>	<p>Sept. 2017</p>	<p>Presentation at Fall Faculty Conference, student leadership orientation, service-learning class orientations, Fall Day of Service presentation, third phase of online marketing, poster/flyers around campus, Constitution Day</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Continue presentations of Stockton Civic Action Plan Communication Campaign	Oct.2017 - Nov. 2017	University Homecoming Weekend & Make a Difference Day into Day of Leadership & Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week.	Ongoing
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people come to higher education to get an education; to learn what is necessary to be successful in a career. When people come to Stockton, they get involved. They get involved in their future fields, they enact valuable leadership skills, learn to think critically about multiple spheres of community, and commit to creating positive change. Above all else, these experiences shape their evolving life-long values, principles, and perspectives.

Civic action and engagement are becoming so woven into the fabric of the identity of Stockton University and its community members that it is difficult to tease out specific strands. Some strands emerge as thick and colorful like The Office of Service-Learning and the Center for Community Engagement, and some are still emerging and requiring strengthening. This civic action plan has begun the process of understanding the warp and weft of that rich tapestry.

