

Civic Commitment Task Force Recommendations
for the
May 2009 UI Campus Leadership Retreat

Integrating Civic Commitment with the University's Strategic Plan

May 5, 2009

Civic Engagement is an essential part of scholarship. . . .

—Dr. Ernest Boyer

Over the years, Carnegie Foundation reports have expressed great concern that higher education as a whole has lost its direction, that it is no longer at the vital center of the nation's work.

We as a nation are uncertain about our priorities at home and abroad. We are shaken by the awareness of the limits on growth and resources that were once thought to be unending. For the first time in about a half century, America's colleges and universities are *not* caught up in some urgent national endeavor.

—Boyer and Mitang, *Building Community* (1996)

Introduction:

The Chancellor's Civic Commitment Task Force (CCTF) devoted much of its work in its final year of service (AY 2008/2009) to two tasks. The first was documenting campus civic commitment activities in order to apply—successfully—for the Community Engagement classification awarded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The second was to develop a set of recommendations that we believe are critical to UI's ability to achieve the goals in our *Strategic Plan*.

The recommendations of the CCTF follow below. They are based on the collective experience of the CCTF and result from a year-long process of informally gathering feedback from across campus, combined with a focused analysis of key strengths, weaknesses, and issues.

Four CCTF working groups were formed around the four main questions that arose from its analysis.

- I. How can civic commitment grow within the campus teaching mission?
- II. How can civic commitment grow within the campus research mission?
- III. How can resources to support civic commitment be identified, developed, and sustained?
- IV. How do we track civic commitment work to assess progress toward meeting the University's strategic plan?

For each of the four questions, working group members developed a vision statement, goals, strategies, outcomes, and ways to track and coordinate progress.

The CCTF is confident that its work will strengthen the achievements and reputation of UI, as well as contribute to fulfilling the campus *Strategic Plan* as it relates to civic commitment.

Members of the CCTF Strategic Planning Working Group: Michael Andrejasich, Ann Peterson Bishop (CCTF Chair), Kristine Campbell, Paula Kaufman, Wynne Korr, Kimberlie Kranich, Stig Landesskog, Peter Mortensen, Kirstin Phelps, and Renee Romano.

Integrating Civic Commitment with UI's *Strategic Plan*:

I. *How can civic commitment grow within the campus teaching mission?*

Vision: The concept of individual responsibility for advancing the “greater good” of the community through knowledge, research, creativity, and action is central to citizenship and is the core of education at the University of Illinois.

Goal I.A: By 2014, 25% of course offerings on the Urbana campus will provide a civic commitment and/or service learning component. This goal is consistent with aspirations shared in the report that qualified the campus for the Community Engagement elective classification offered by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=1213>).

Strategies: Provide faculty incentives such as course development grants and salary increments/stipends. This could be done by building on the model of support for the community-based learning that was a component of the Partnership Illinois effort. Another viable model is the Outreach and Engagement Grants program at The Ohio State University (<http://outreachgrants.osu.edu/>).

Integrate civic commitment/service learning components into General Education requirements, create a discrete General Education category, and/or identify a civic commitment/service learning thematic cluster within existing General Education offerings. (Note that the General Education Board is in the second year of a three-year process of re-visioning campus general education requirements. It is using the AAC&U Liberal Education and America's Promise document on “essential learning outcomes” as a guide in this process [see <http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm>]).

Develop a civic commitment component for James Scholars in the colleges, Chancellor's Scholars in the Campus Honors Program, and in first-year Discovery courses. (Note that the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Honors Programs is completing work on implementing enhancements to first-year James Scholar curricular and

co-curricular programming, and may turn in 2009-10 to consideration of curricula and co-curricula at the sophomore level.)

Increase the value of instructional units (IUs) for courses with a civic commitment/service learning focus.

Provide administrative stipends for coordination of community engagement/service learning activities.

Outcomes: Every University of Illinois graduate matriculates into a career with a heightened awareness of civic responsibility, understanding of the value of public service, and the ability to contribute to his or her communities as an engaged citizen.

Tracking: Flag relevant courses in Banner with a civic commitment attribute—a relatively uncomplicated process, according to the Registrar, Carol Malmgren.

Develop an ICES core of questions for measuring teaching and learning outcomes in service learning, community-based research, and community-based learning classrooms.

Develop a core of relevant questions for the Chancellor's Senior Survey, or at least one key question if that is all that can be accommodated in the near term.

Develop a relevant core of questions for the UA Planning and Budgeting one-, five-, and ten-year alumni surveys.

Draw relevant findings from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data. Examine these data in relation to the Chancellor's Senior Survey findings to determine if there is a needs gap (that is, student expression of desire for involvement in a civic engagement activity versus fulfillment of that desire).

If a campus-level Civic Commitment Council is created, one part of its charge should pertain to the coordination of undergraduate civic engagement/service learning experiences. Issues include: (a) defining curricular and co-curricular pathways that begin with involvement in social *service* activities and culminate in immersion in social *justice* activities, (b) supporting training in best practices in instruction and outreach, (c) facilitating community partnerships as the framework for social service and social justice activities, and (d) assessing the effectiveness of undergraduate civic engagement/service learning experiences. If a Civic Commitment Council is not created, then a committee should be named to address the aforementioned needs in the realm of undergraduate education.

II. How can civic commitment grow within the campus research mission?

- Vision:** Following our land-grant mission, reinvented for 21st century America, the University's research programs are effectively put into the service of a just and prosperous society and improve the quality of life by responding to local, national, and global societal needs.
- Goal II.A:** The output of research at Illinois will focus on addressing important societal issues.
- Strategies:** Foster increased dialogue and understanding among faculty, students, and staff about the role and nature of civic commitment in research. Seek opportunities to expand participation of community leaders and representatives of civic organizations in campus life and civic commitment bodies.
- Outcomes:** Increased faculty and student research at all levels and across all disciplines that addresses important societal issues.
- Tracking:** Formally assess the impact of research annually in specified thematic domains (e.g., focus on a different one each year).
- Goal II.B:** The results of Illinois scholarship will be disseminated and available to the scholarly community and groups as well as to individuals from the community at large.
- Strategies:** Use IDEALS for dissemination purposes in addition to traditional scholarly communication outlets and existing means of communicating and translating campus research to the public.
- Outcomes:** Illinois scholarship will contribute directly to local, national, and global works that address societal needs.
- Tracking:** Formally assess the impact of research annually in specified thematic domains (e.g., focus on a different one each year).

III. How can resources to support civic commitment be identified, developed, and sustained?

- Vision: UI has a systematic, diverse, and accountable program for identifying, developing, and sustaining resources for civic commitment.
- Goal III.A: Generating civic commitment funding is a high priority for UI Advancement, across the University, in all units, demonstrated annual increases in support generated for civic commitment activities, over the next 5 years.
- Strategies: Include a representative from Advancement on the Civic Commitment Council.
- Develop annual funding targets for Advancement in civic commitment.
- Provide appropriate professional development opportunities for Advancement staff on identifying, developing, and sustaining resources for civic commitment activities.
- Make civic commitment experience a priority in hiring new Advancement staff.
- Advancement provides increased training for campus units on obtaining external funding for civic commitment activities.
- Outcomes: Advancement staff has a better understanding of the importance of civic commitment in research, teaching and engagement, and provide ongoing and productive support for all campus units. They build a strong track record in identifying and cultivating avenues for securing financial support for civic commitment. Advancement is able to articulate the role and impact of, and advocate for, civic commitment, securing funding for major new campus programs in civic commitment, on a par with, for example, DukeEngage (<http://dukeengage.duke.edu/>) and the DePaul Steans Center for Community-Based Service Learning and Community Service Studies (<http://cbsl.depaul.edu/>) that have a tremendous impact on what faculty, students, and staff can achieve.
- Tracking: Advancement benchmarks its civic commitment efforts against peer institutions and documents its achievements. Its campus training opportunities are reported through OVCPE. Advancement participation and contributions are documented in the Civic Commitment Council minutes.
- Goal III.B: Provide annual seed funding for civic commitment activities on a par with peer universities.
- Strategies: OVCPE and the Civic Commitment Council jointly administer seed funding for integrating civic commitment with research, teaching, and service with a strong emphasis on supporting sustainable programs that help accomplish the

University's strategic plan. Funding may be provided through an annual request for proposals and/or the provision of smaller amounts that are available in a less-competitive and ongoing fashion (e.g., any faculty member may request up to \$100 for materials and \$300 for travel related to a service learning course).

Outcomes: Faculty, students, and staff are aware of and can rely on a consistent stream of support from OVCPE to develop new civic commitment activities and provide basic support not currently available for ongoing activities--with strong emphasis on developing capacity and ensuring sustainability.

Tracking: Seed funding monitored and reported annually by OVCPE.

Goal III.C: Make impact and sustainability high priorities (for education, support, definition, etc.) for civic commitment activities with increased investment visible over the next 5 years.

Strategies: Encourage and support development of strong, multifaceted, and ongoing relationships with high-need communities important to the University's mission and strategic plan, such as East St. Louis, North Champaign, and Chicago. Research has proven that mutually trusting and beneficial, persistent relationships where all partners contribute resources (rather than 'drive by' research and one-shot project resources solely by either academia or community partners) are crucial to the success and impact of a university's civic commitment activities for all stakeholders.

Focus on civic commitment activities that advance campus strategic goals, such as support for public K-12 education, health and wellness, statewide economic development, and global involvement.

Build stronger relationships with community leaders who represent strategic partners for UI civic commitment.

OVCPE identifies, develops, supports, and assists in coordinating opportunities to advance social entrepreneurship in university-community partnerships. Social entrepreneurship is a promising and well-tested model relevant to civic commitment (and applicable to research, teaching, and service) that advances innovative uses of resources, capacity development, and sustainability in achieving social impact.

Provide training for faculty, staff, and students in building community relationships for research, teaching, and service, especially in high need, underserved settings. Such training could be offered by existing knowledgeable staff in OVCPE, the Community Informatics Initiative, the East St. Louis Action Research Project, Center for Teaching Excellence, the Leadership Center, etc.

- Outcomes: Increase campus acknowledgement of the important contributions of community partners for building civic commitment capacity and impact on campus. Campus investments in civic commitment bring higher returns to both the University and its partners. A higher reputation for the University in the local community exists. Traditionally underserved youth are eager to enroll at UI. The campus is better equipped to achieve impact and sustainability in its strategic civic commitment activities. Campus civic commitment is highly visible and delivered in high-need locations in an ongoing manner, made more effective via strong relationships and trust and concerted, mutually beneficial effort. More civic commitment resources accrue to the University *from* its community partners.
- Tracking: Establish community-based coalitions to monitor progress in each strategic location (e.g., North Champaign, East St. Louis). Develop qualitative and quantitative measures for civic commitment that are consistent with the campus strategic plan.
- Goal III.D: As a public, land-grant institution, the University broadens its influence and commitment for civic commitment across the state.
- Strategies: Create a community-university advisory group with membership from across the state.
- Outcomes: UI's civic commitment activities increase and are more visible throughout the state. Leadership from communities is strengthened.
- Tracking: Statewide community-university advisory group provides semiannual reports to OVCPE.

IV. How do we track civic commitment work to assess progress toward meeting the University's strategic plan?

Vision: The University of Illinois has a systematic, accessible, and accountable process for measuring internal and external impact of civic commitment by collecting quantitative and qualitative data (e.g. impact stories for knowledge, behavior, and attitude changes) and creating digital and print stories for distribution.

Goal IV.A: All Illinois faculty, staff, students, and community partners involved in civic commitment activities will measure the impact of their work using qualitative and quantitative methods of measurement.

Strategies: Assess internal effectiveness and impact of civic commitment work internally through a rotating five-year cycle with each year focusing on one of the following five strategic areas: Energy and Sustainability, Health and Wellness, Translational Research, Excellence in Graduate and Undergraduate Education, and Digitization of the Arts.

Create an assessment coordinating committee responsible for development and implementation of the assessment tools used in the proposed five-year cycle.

Identify appropriate campus units to provide assessment resources and training for faculty, staff, and students measuring impact of civic commitment activities.

Outcomes: Evaluation of civic commitment activities at Illinois will align and be integrated into strategic priorities for the campus. The University of Illinois will have an established, accessible entity that will create sustainable procedures and resources for measuring civic commitment activities on campus. Faculty, staff, and students interested in learning how to effectively measure civic commitment outcomes and impact will have accessible resources for information on measurement or evaluation tools.

Tracking: Determine qualitative and quantitative strategies to assess the **internal** impact of civic commitment.

Quantitative strategies:

- Add questions on civic commitment impact to course ICES questionnaires.
- Add questions on civic commitment impact to campus Senior Survey.
- Create designation for civic commitment to incorporate into FACTS database for student, faculty, staff, and friends of Illinois.
- Create ability to flag service-learning courses within Banner.

Qualitative strategies:

- Encourage units to incorporate open-ended impact questions to annual reviews measuring impact of civic commitment activities.

- Hire graduate interns to work with the assessment coordinating committee to provide research and create blueprints for assessing civic commitment activities across campus.
- Create functionality within the Public Engagement Portal for community partners and Illinois faculty, staff, and students to input impact statements on civic commitment activities.

Determine qualitative and quantitative strategies to assess the **external** impact of civic commitment.

Quantitative strategies:

- Create functionality within the Public Engagement Portal for community partners and Illinois faculty, staff, and students to document statistics on civic commitment activities.
- Utilize Assessment Coordinating Committee and/or interns to collaborate with community partners on creation of impact assessment.

Qualitative strategies:

- Encourage units to incorporate open-ended impact questions into annual reviews measuring impact of civic commitment activities.
- Hire graduate interns to work with the assessment coordinating committee to provide guidance and create blueprints for assessing civic commitment activities across campus.
- Provide training and encourage the usage of the Harwood Significance Barometer as an assessment tool for community partners to use in rating and recording their civic commitment experience and gain testimonials

Goal II.B: Create visible and multi-use digital, print, or media stories of impact for distribution to University of Illinois stakeholders.

Strategies: Identify campus gatekeepers to share civic commitment testimonials with external and internal audiences (e.g. Office of Public Affairs, Alumni Association, Development officers, Chief Communication Officers, and WILL).

Create process of collecting student, faculty, staff, and community partner experiences with civic commitment activities.

Identify appropriate campus messaging venues to share civic commitment testimonials with internal and external audiences, (e.g. On My Watch e-newsletter, Provost newsletter, Vice-Chancellor for Public Engagement website, Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs website, and alumni and parent publications).

Outcomes: The University of Illinois will be seen as an impactful community partner through streamlined and systemic sharing of civic commitment activities to internal and external stakeholders.

The University of Illinois will have a formal way of collecting first-hand testimonials from students, faculty, staff, and community partners about the impact of civic commitment projects.

Civic commitment engagement will be seen as an essential aspect of the 'Illinois experience' for internal and external stakeholders; Illinois will gain the reputation of being a place where civic commitment is valued and expected.

Tracking: Documented by OVCPE.