Building the Engaged Campus

A Campus Planning Guide

Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement)

For campuses committed to engaging with their communities, several frameworks can be useful. Barbara Holland’s Levels of Commitment to Community Engagement provides a vision of the engaged campus in which engagement is fully integrated as strategy to accomplish the campus mission and goals. The elective Carnegie Community Engagement Classification documentation framework can be used to help institutions identify specific strengths and areas for quality improvement as an engaged campus as you review your institution’s community engagement commitments and activities. The President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll recognizes higher education institutions that reflect the values of exemplary, impactful community service. Applying can be a useful learning process as campuses identify their work. If engagement is included as part of the campus mission, The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS) requires evidence of integration, accomplishment and improvement. Campuses will want to provide evidence of their community engagement when addressing two SACS accreditation standards:

3.3 Institutional Effectiveness: 3.3.1: The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

3.3.1.1: educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.5: Community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

3.4 All Educational Programs: 3.4.2: The institution's continuing education, outreach and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission.

This tool merges categories from the Holland matrix, the application for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, and relevant SACS standard, as well as similar sections from the President's Community Service Honor Roll, to provide a planning tool your campus can use to set yearly goals and determine progress towards full integration of community engagement.
Using this Guide:

1. Gather or create your Council on Civic Engagement. Involve those who are committed to full integration of community engagement, ensuring broad representation from across campus (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff, community partner).

2. Ask each person to review the planning guide, identifying the general categories they think could be campus goals. They may also find it helpful to review the details of the Carnegie Documentation framework, the Holland matrix, and the President's Honor Roll -- links/copies can be found on the Yammer site.

3. Meet. Together acknowledge the areas that are strengths. Know how you are documenting or can document the strengths. If a strength is identified but it cannot be documented, set the goal of documenting.

4. Review. Celebrate the accomplishments to date.

5. Set three concrete goals for growth. Determine the objectives and actions that can help accomplish those goals, as well as the strategy or process by which you will create evidence of accomplishment and/or impact.

6. Revisit the planning guide at least yearly to determine the next goals, objectives and actions that will strengthen your institution's commitment to being an engaged campus.

7. Track your Council's work in planning, monitoring and measuring. Integrate that work into your SACS reports, Carnegie application, or any other processes that require demonstration of your campus' work to build community engagement.

The letter behind each descriptor indicates the source:

(H) = Holland matrix

(C) = the Carnegie Community Engagement classification application

(P) = the President's Community Service Honor Roll application

(S) = SACS standards

For more information on a descriptor, you can visit those documents.

The term service-learning (s-l) denotes academically-based community engaged courses. Other terms include community-based learning, academic service learning, or public service courses.