Civic Engagement at Elon University in 2020
Strategic Plan (Draft)

Elon University is a national leader in Civic Engagement, serving as one of the model campuses for the Carnegie Classification on Civic Engagement and being recognized as one of the nation’s top three universities for community service by earning a Presidential Award in the first President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. Elon’s civic engagement programs include Periclean Scholars, Social Entrepreneur Scholars, the Center for Leadership, the Elon Academy, the National Campaign for Student Political and Civic Engagement, the Kernodle Center for Service Learning, North Carolina Campus Compact, and the Elon Student Government Association.

Over the next ten to fifteen years, Elon will continue to lead the nation in civic engagement and fully educate students for lives of engaged citizenship. We will continue an integrated focus on civic engagement efforts both in and out of the classroom, to support student learning across their entire college experience.

In order to fulfill its civic engagement mission, the Council on Civic Engagement suggests that Elon University include the following in the strategic plan for 2009-20??.

I. **More fully recognize its responsibility, as a member of the larger community, to actively address social conditions through mutually beneficial and reciprocal relationships with community partners.**

A. Develop an advisory board to ensure all civic engagement programming is conducted with community partners and based on best practices.
B. Develop an institutional task force on faculty and staff civic engagement.
C. Coordinate a community mapping assessment to identify where the community and the institution are not connected in order to guide our strategic planning.
D. Develop ongoing partnerships with local neighborhoods.
E. Engage Elon students in civic engagement projects focused on a broad array of needs in the local community.
F. Provide programs to increase college access and success for high need students in the local community.
G. Develop a protocol for use of facilities, library services, computer resources, etc. by community organizations who partner with university civic engagement initiatives.
II. Design increasingly complex and diverse learning experiences that deepen students’ understanding of social and political issues, cultivate students’ commitment to civic action, and develop skills for effective citizenship (e.g., communication, critical analysis, leadership).

A. Develop a definition of civic engagement and articulate specific civic learning outcomes for all students.
B. Make civic engagement a prominent focus in both the curriculum and co-curriculum.
   1. Propose civic engagement be considered in the general studies review.
   2. Encourage all academic departments and programs to prepare students to use the knowledge and skills of their disciplines to better their communities.
   3. Provide annual civic engagement experiences on campus during winter term.
   4. Support more cohort groups focused on deeper and more sustainable commitments.
      a. Create a Civic Engagement Residential College with cohorts of first year students living in a residential area and enrolled in courses and co-curricular programs with civic engagement themes.
      b. Explore options for developing cohesive programs of study that engage students in increasingly sophisticated levels of understanding and involvement in current issues.
   5. Expand internship, leadership and service opportunities through more international and local partnerships including Elon’s national and international centers in New York, LA, Florence, Costa Rica, etc.
   6. Create the Elon Service Corps (Service Nation??), including an opportunity for a gap year program.
   7. Provide opportunities for all students to be deeply engaged in electoral processes.
   8. Provide a physical space/open area for students to actively engage in open, spontaneous political discussions/displays and advocacy activities.

C. Provide more student initiated civic engagement opportunities
   1. Explore structures whereby students can be recognized for their self-initiated public service.
   2. Connect students with grant opportunities (Dosomething.org, the Clinton Global Initiative, etc.).
   3. Expand student initiative grants for civic engagement projects.
Updated on July 19, 2009

III. Celebrate and reward the accomplishments of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners who demonstrate good citizenship, live lives of civic engagement, and support the civic life and programs of the university.

A. Gather data on how faculty and staff involvement in civic engagement relates to the reward system.
   1. Draft a statement regarding the Civically Engaged Teacher/Scholar and provide input into the Task Force on Service.
B. Broaden ways to support staff to be involved in civic engagement projects.
C. Develop ways to recognize and reward community partners.
D. Consider ways to recognize high quality civic engagement work of students, faculty, staff and community partners during Celebrate Week.
E. Develop ways to recognize alumni who demonstrate a sustained commitment to civic engagement.

IV. Ensure Elon continues to be a leader in civic engagement.

A. Work to increase funds and resources available to faculty, staff, and students for civic engagement projects and experiences.
   1. Create an Elon Civic Engagement guide to show faculty, staff, students and alums the entry points for civic engagement efforts on campus.
   2. Update the civic engagement website to make it easily searchable by faculty, staff, students, potential donors, and those outside the university.
   3. Apply for a major grant to support the civic mission of the university.
   4. Provide resources and support for faculty and staff presentations at professional conferences and for publications on civic engagement.
   5. Provide faculty development opportunities.
B. Develop a civic engagement institute.
C. Create a “board of visitors” with national and international experts.

As a final comment, a comprehensive assessment plan must be developed for the Civic Engagement initiatives. This plan should be both “customizable” for individual programs within the initiative and applicable to civic engagement across the university as a whole. First, individual programs must establish measureable criteria that are reflective of their missions. These criteria should be used to assess the success of the individual programs and guide program enhancements. Second, civic engagement as a major institutional initiative will require both measurable data and anecdotal evidence for assessing the impact of the overall initiative and the collective contributions of its component programs.