

A CRUCIBLE MOMENT: COLLEGE LEARNING AND DEMOCRACY'S FUTURE

Caryn McTighe Musil

Association of American Colleges and Universities

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Each generation must work to preserve the fundamental values and principles of its heritage... to narrow the gap between the ideals of this nation and the reality of the daily lives of its people; and to more fully realize the potential of our constitutional, democratic republic. We can emerge from this civic recession, but to do so will require a full-scale national investment from every level of government and every sector of society.

Charles N. Quigley, Executive Director, Center for Civic Education

WHY NOW?

INDICATORS OF ANEMIC CIVIC HEALTH IN US

- U.S. ranked 139th in voter participation of 172 world democracies in 2007.
- Only 24% of graduating high school seniors scored at the proficient or advanced level in civics in 2010.
- Less than ½ of 12th graders reported studying international topics as part of a civics education.

MORE INDICATORS OF CIVIC MALAISE

- College seniors surveyed in 2006-07 averaged just over 50% in a civic literacy exam.
- Just over 1/3 of college faculty surveyed strongly agreed their campus actively promotes awareness of US or global social, political, and economic issues.
- Just over 1/3 of students surveyed strongly agreed that faculty publicly advocate the need for students to become active and involved citizens.

ONE LAST INDICATOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TO PONDER

- Only one-third of college students surveyed strongly agreed that their college education resulted in increased civic capacities.
 - *Civic awareness* expanded
 - *Skills* learned to effectively change society for the better
 - *Commitment* grew to improve society

FIGURE. Goals for Higher Education, 1947

“The President’s Commission on Higher Education has attempted to select, from among the principal goals for higher education, those which should come first in our time. They are to bring to all the people of the Nation:

- Education for a fuller realization of democracy in every phase of living.
- Education directly and explicitly for international understanding and cooperation.
- Education for the application of creative imagination and trained intelligence to the solution of social problems and to the administration of public affairs.

“Education is by far the biggest and the most hopeful of the Nation’s enterprises. Long ago our people recognized that education for all is not only democracy’s obligation but its necessity. Education is the foundation of democratic liberties. Without an educated citizenry alert to preserve and extend freedom, it would not long endure.”

Source: President’s Commission on Higher Education (1947a).

TRUMAN COMMISSION KEY RECOMMENDATION

“The first and most essential charge upon higher education is that at all levels and in all fields of specialization, it shall be the carrier of democratic values, ideals, and processes.”

*Higher Education for American
Democracy, 1947*

A NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

A CRUCIBLE MOMENT

College Learning & Democracy's Future



The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement

For Democracy's Future: Five Essential Actions

From The National Task Force on Civic Learning
and Democratic Engagement

- 1. Reclaim and reinvest in the fundamental civic and democratic mission** of schools and of all sectors within higher education.
- 2. Enlarge the current national narrative that erases civic aims and civic literacy** as educational priorities contributing to social, intellectual, and economic capital.
- 3. Advance a contemporary, comprehensive framework for civic learning—embracing US and global interdependence—** that includes historic and modern understandings of democratic values, capacities to engage diverse perspectives and people, and commitment to collective civic problem solving.
- 4. Capitalize upon the interdependent responsibilities of K–12 and higher education** to foster progressively higher levels of civic knowledge, skills, examined values, and action as expectations for every student.
- 5. Expand the number of robust, generative civic partnerships and alliances, locally, nationally, and globally** to address common problems, empower people to act, strengthen communities and nations, and generate new frontiers of knowledge.

ENLARGE THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE: COMPLETION, CAREERS, AND CITIZENSHIP

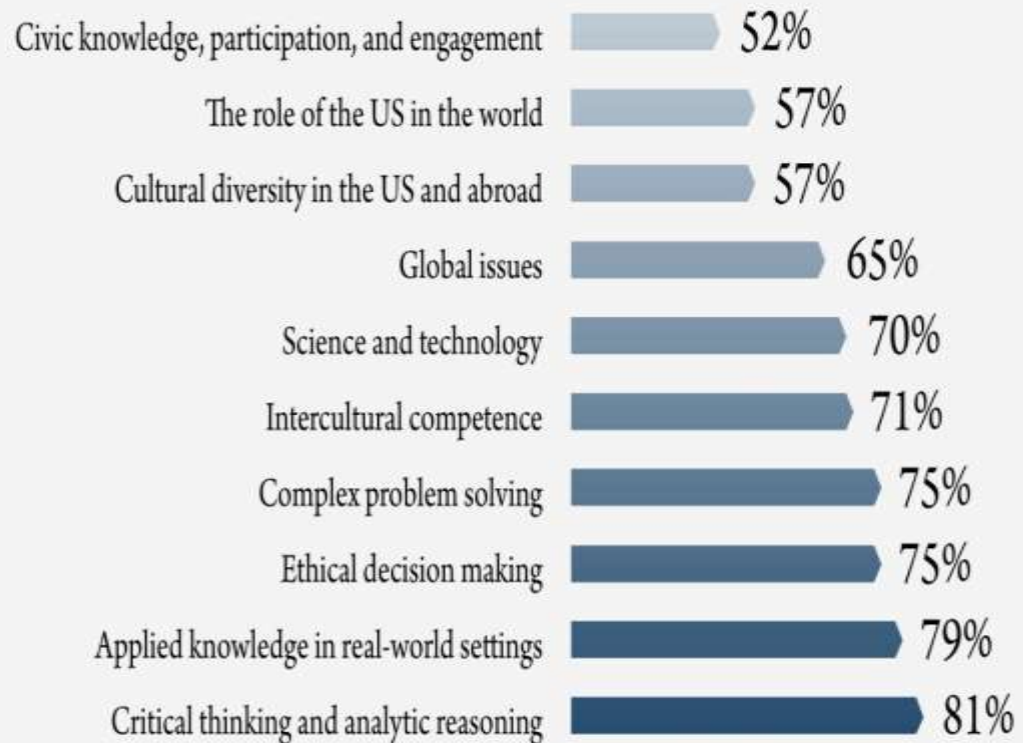
- Correlation between service learning and college completion
 - academic engagement
 - deepening connections with faculty
 - higher grade point
 - higher retention
 - more likely to complete degrees
 - career clarification

CIVIC LEARNING AND WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT FROM HIGHER EDUCATION

FIGURE:

Civic Learning Outcomes and Workforce Expectations

Percentages of employers who want colleges to “Place more emphasis” on essential learning outcomes



Source: Data from Hart Research Associates, 2010.

CONTEMPORARY, COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION OF CIVIC LEARNING

- Contestation and debates about principles
- Diversity past, present, and future
- Navigating multiple perspectives
- Our world, not just my rights
- Interdependence globally and locally
- New modes of collective action

NEW UNDERSTANDINGS BEHIND OLD WORDS

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Values
- Collective Action

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

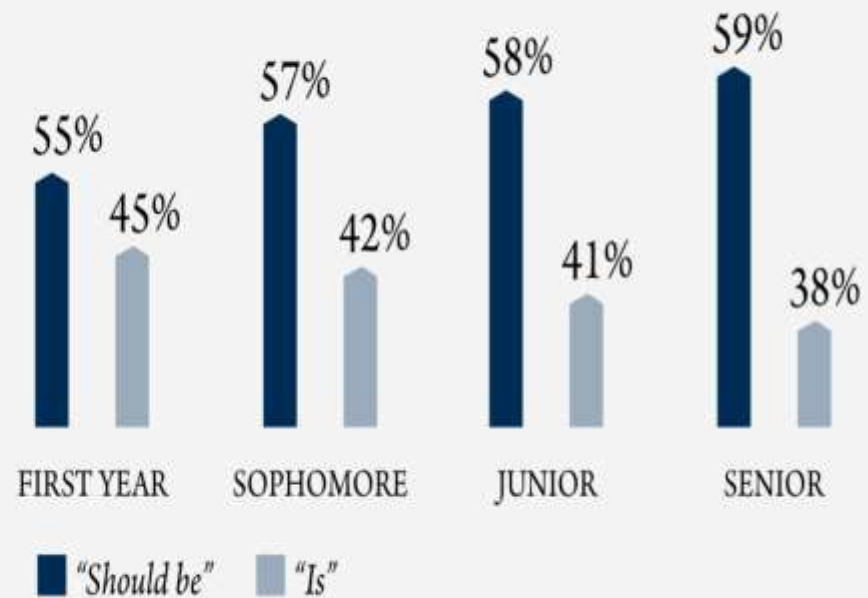
1. Foster a **CIVIC ETHOS** across all parts of the campus and educational culture.
2. Make **CIVIC LITERACY** a core expectation for all students.
3. Practice **CIVIC INQUIRY** across all fields of study.
4. Advance **CIVIC ACTION** through transformative partnerships, at home and abroad.

STUDENTS ARE URGING HIGHER EDUCATION TO EMBRACE CIVIC LEARNING

FIGURE: Student Views on the Importance of Contributing to the Larger Community

Percentages of students who strongly agree that contributing to community “should be” a major focus of college and “is” a major focus of college, by year in school.

Source: Data from Dey et al. (2009).



THE FOUNDATION HAS ALREADY BEEN PARTIALLY LAID

- Curricular civic pathways
 - Making civic literacy a core expectation for all students in general education programs
 - Tulane University, Portland State University, St. Edward's University
 - Integrating civic inquiry into a central field of study
 - Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Wagner College, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

OTHER FOUNDATIONS TO BUILD UPON

- Powerful civic pedagogies
 - Intergroup and deliberative dialogue
 - University of Michigan, California State University at Chico, Sustained Dialogue Programs
 - Service Learning
 - Campus Compact, American Democracy Project, California State University Monterey Bay
 - Collective civic problem solving
 - University of Maryland, Duke University, Northern Arizona University

STILL MORE FOUNDATIONS LAID IN NEW WINGS

- Advancing Collaborative, Generative Civic Partnerships and Alliances
 - From charity to reciprocity to generative partnership
 - Syracuse University, Widener College, Anchor Institutions, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

FIGURE: The Faces/Phases of Citizenship

FACE/PHASE	COMMUNITY IS...	CIVIC SCOPE	LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE	BENEFITS...
Exclusionary	only your own	civic disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one vantage point (yours) • monocultural 	one party
Oblivious	a resource to mine	civic detachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observational skills • largely monocultural 	one party
Naive	a resource to engage	civic amnesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no history • no vantage point • acultural 	random people
Charitable	a resource that needs assistance	civic altruism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of deprivations • affective kindness and respect • multicultural, but yours is still the norm center 	the givers' feelings, the sufferers' immediate needs
Reciprocal	a resource to empower and be empowered by	civic engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legacies of inequalities • values of partnering • intercultural competencies • arts of democracy • multiple vantage points • multicultural 	society as a whole in the present
Generative	an interdependent resource filled with possibilities	civic prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struggles for democracy • interconnectedness • analysis of interlocking systems • intercultural competencies • arts of democracy • multiple interactive vantage points • multicultural 	everyone now and in the future

Source: Adapted from Musil 2003.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEXT DECADES OF CIVIC LEARNING

- From elective to expected
- From one time to progressive learning over time
- From individually oriented civic action to collaboratively oriented action
- From some faculty in some disciplines to all faculty in all disciplines
- From parallel practices and programs to integrated ones

FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM

- “Democracy needs to be born anew every generation, and education is the midwife.”

John Dewey

- “When minds close, democracy begins to close. . . Democracy invites us to take risks. It asks that we vacate the comfortable seat of certitude, remain pliable, and act, ultimately, in behalf of the common good.”

Terry Tempest Williams

- “There can be no perfect democracy curtailed by color, race or poverty, but with all we accomplish all, even peace.”

W.E.B DuBois

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT

Caryn McTighe Musil

Senior Vice President

Association of American Colleges and Universities

musil@aacu.org

www.aacu.org

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http://www.aacu.org/civic_learning/crucible/index.cfm